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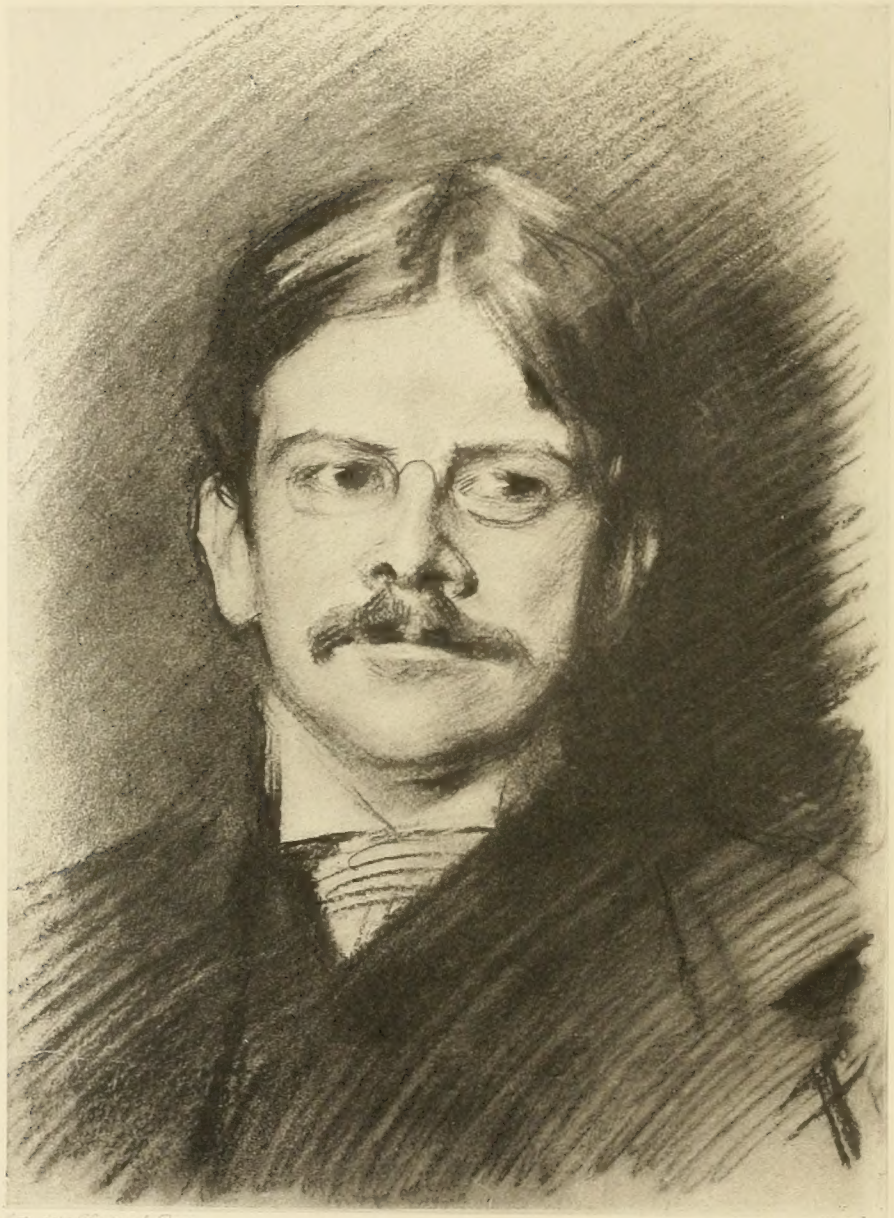

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A CHARCOAL PORTRAIT OF EDWIN A. ABBEY.

DRAWN BY J. S. SARGENT, R.A.

Circa 1888.

EDWIN AUSTIN ABBEY

Royal Academician

The Record of His Life and Work

By E. V. Lucas

With Two Hundred Illustrations

Volume I

1852-1893

NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
LONDON: METHUEN AND COMPANY LIMITED
1921

PREFACE

THE purpose of this book—to record as simply and directly and happily as possible the progress and achievement of one of the simplest, most direct and happiest of artists—is, or should be, so implicit in the text that no prefatory signpost is needed. But I should like to say that without the assistance of Mrs. Abbey the story could not have had either its order or its fulness. No biographer probably was ever so well provided with material, nor could material for a biography ever have been so complete or in such perfect arrangement.

It had always been Mrs. Abbey's wish not to appear personally in the book at all, but gradually she was led to realise that an association of such similarity of ideals, such minute and profound intimacy and interdependence, as that of herself and her husband, made her presence in these pages necessary. But for the preservation of the letters passing between them before marriage and during their infrequent periods of absence from each other, as well as her memory of every incident of their joint life, the narrative would be far less circumstantial. I was also indebted greatly to the late Alfred Parsons, R.A., who was Abbey's closest friend in his early London days, and who kindly allowed me to draw upon his recollections.

Mr. J. S. Sargent, R.A., Abbey's compatriot, friend and fellow-worker, has selected all the illustrations from Abbey's work in black-and-white, water-colour, pastel and oil, with the exception of those in the text.

Special thanks are due to Mr. J. E. Kelly, the American sculptor and an associate of Abbey in New York in the 'seventies, for his untiring efforts in collecting data concerning that period and in procuring material which it would otherwise have been very difficult to obtain, such as Abbey's letters to the late Charles Parsons (kindly lent by Mrs. Parsons), and to the late C. S. Reinhart (kindly lent by that artist's daughter). I have also to thank other of Abbey's early American colleagues for the reminiscences which they have set

down for this work—Mr. Willard P. Snyder, Mr. Gilbert Gaul, Mr. Charles Mente, Mr. W. A. Rogers, Mr. W. H. Carroll, Mr. W. H. Low and Mr. Kelly; and I am grateful for similar services freely rendered by Abbey's assistants at Fairford at the latter end of his career—Mr. Cadogan Cowper, A.R.A., Mr. W. G. Simmonds, Mr. George F. Swaish, and Mr. Ernest Board; while the chapter on Abbey's enthusiasm for cricket would be inadequate but for the kind assistance of the Hon. Walter James, Sir J. M. Barrie, Mr. Henry Ford, Mr. G. H. Swinstead, Mr. Dermod O'Brien, and the late A. H. Studd.

The executors of the late Henry James have kindly allowed me to make what extracts I wished from his letters to Abbey, none of which have been published before; and to the courtesy of Miss Birnie Philip is due the presence of the letter from Whistler in Chapter XXX.

Thanks are given to Messrs. Harper and Brothers for allowing reproductions from their copyright publications of Abbey's work, and to Messrs. Curtis and Cameron for the use of their negatives.

The body of this book was printed in 1919, hence the absence of any reference in the text to changes which have since occurred.

July, 1921. E. V. L.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

1852–1868 Aged 1–16

Roswell Abbey (Abbey's Paternal Grandfather)—William Maxwell Abbey—Huguenot Descent—Abbey's Maternal Ancestors—A Wiltshire Family—Black-and-White at Two Years Old—Schools in Philadelphia—First Instruction in Art—"Oliver Optic's" *Our Boys and Girls*—Will H. Low and His Boy Colleague

CHAPTER II

FIRST WORK AND THE PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY

1868–1871 Aged 16–18

Willard P. Snyder's Recollections—A Young Editor—Enthusiasm for Dickens—Professor Schussele—A Student at the Pennsylvania Academy—The Pre-Raphaelites—Arthur Boyd Houghton—Favourite Reading—Early Drawings

CHAPTER III

HOME LIFE IN NEW YORK AND THE HOUSE OF HARPER

1871 Aged 18–19

Out into the World—Charles Parsons—The Potter House and "Cousin Jo"—The Lure of Music—Laborious Nights—The Firm of Harper and Brothers—Journalists with the Pencil—Henry James on Abbey

CHAPTER IV

IN HARPERS' ART DEPARTMENT

1871 Aged 18–19

An Autobiographical Letter—The Art Staff at Franklin Square—C. S. Reinhart—Winslow Homer—Gilbert Gaul's Recollections—Will H. Low's Recollections—Abbey's First Magazine Drawings—A Scrap-book—The Great English Illustrators—Millais' Tribute

CHAPTER V

IN HARPERS' ART DEPARTMENT

1872–1874 Aged 19–22

Charles Mente's Recollections—Charles Parsons as a Martinet—Abbey's Purposefulness—An Illustrator's Versatility—J. E. Kelly's Recollections—A Glimpse of the Promised Land—Herrick and Shakespeare

CONTENTS

CHAPTER VI
A FREE-LANCE IN NEW YORK
1874–1875 Aged 22–23
Departure from the Art Department—Mr. Kelly's Recollections—The 35 Union Square Studio—Historical Drawings—A. W. Drake—W. H. Carroll's Recollections—A Merry Studio—Dickens' *Christmas Stories*—The Blackburn Exhibition of English Draughtsmen—The Old University Building—" The Stage Office"—Winslow Homer—Mr. Kelly's Tribute

CHAPTER VII
RETURN TO THE ART DEPARTMENT
1876 Aged 24
A Growing Reputation—W. A. Rogers—A. B. Frost—Abbey's Helpfulness—Abbey at Twenty-three—First Decorative Work—The Centennial Exhibition

CHAPTER VIII
THE TILE CLUB
1877–1878 Aged 25–26
An Epoch-Making Year in American Art—Influence of Paris and Munich—Abbey and England—The Society of American Artists—The Fashion for Applied Art—The Birth of a Confederation—A List of Sobriquets—A New Word and its Coiner—William " Polyphemus " Laffan—A Week on Long Island

CHAPTER IX
END OF NEW YORK CAREER
1878 Aged 25–26
A Critical Year—Mr. Gilbert Gaul and Mr. Kelly—Theatrical Drawings—Mr. Brander Matthews' Bookplate—" A Rose in October "—Abbey Decides for England—Two Farewell Parties—Abbey and the Old Country

CHAPTER X
STRATFORD-ON-AVON
1878 Aged 26
Companions of the Voyage—Abbey's Illustrated Letters—First Sight of England—Stratford-on-Avon—Washington Irving and Abbey—An English Christmas—Financial Embarrassments—English Hospitality

CHAPTER XI
ENGLISH FRIENDS AND FAMILY LETTERS
1879 Aged 26–27
Fred Barnard—George Henry Boughton—F. W. Jameson—Dinner Parties—Alfred Parsons—A Musical Evening—Brahms—George Henschel—Madam Clara Moscheles—William Black—J. MacNeill Whistler—Alma Tadema—The White House, Chelsea

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XII

FIRST WORK IN LONDON

1879 Aged 26–27

Ways and Means—The National Gallery—Fred Walker—R. L. Stevenson and His Cousin—J. Comyns Carr—Dick Whittington—Augustus St. Gaudens—Westminster Abbey—Dean Stanley—A Hurried Tour in the Lakes—Moncure D. Conway—Burne-Jones—Thackeray's Daughter—Illness—*Scribner's* Rivalry with *Harper's*—An American Appreciation

CHAPTER XIII

ILL HEALTH AND HARD WORK

1880–1881 Aged 27–29

Convalescence and Misgivings—Art in America—Mrs. Cameron, the Photographer—Death of Abbey's Mother—The Pains of Conscience—Bastien Lepage's " Joan of Arc "—C. S. Reinhart—The Paris Ateliers—A River Holiday—*A Castle in Spain*—In Holland with Boughton—Henry Irving and Ellen Terry—Munich—G. J. Pinwell—Lechlade—In the Highlands with Black

CHAPTER XIV

AN AMERICAN INTERLUDE

1881–1882 Aged 29

In New York with Alfred Parsons—58½ West 10th Street—The Tile Club Again—A Second Visit to Long Island—Another Club Discussion—*Harper's Christmas*—W. A. Rogers's Recollections—Painting at High Pressure—The Founding of " The Kinsmen "

CHAPTER XV

ENGLAND AGAIN

1882–1883 Aged 29–31

Costume *versus* Dress—A Tour in Germany and Denmark—Black's *Judith Shakespeare*—Abbey's *Herrick* Published—Wood-Engraving and Process—Illustrations to *She Stoops to Conquer* Begun—" The Widower "—Reinhart—" Responsibility "—Illustrations to Pope—Austin Dobson—Poetical Tributes—" The Kinsmen " at Stratford—Mary Anderson

CHAPTER XVI

SOCIABLE NIGHTS AND DAYS

1884–1885 Aged 31–33

With Black in Scotland—A First Salmon—Music and Conviviality—Andrew Lang—Sir Luke Fildes' Recollections—A Dinner to Lawrence Barrett—A Coaching Tour with Andrew Carnegie—Matthew Arnold—Charles Parsons—" Cousin Jo "—*Judith Shakespeare*—A Spring Morning in London—First Exhibit in the R.A.—A Dutch Tableau—Randolph Caldecott

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XVII
BROADWAY IN WORCESTERSHIRE
F. D. Millet—Henry James on Broadway—Henry James and Abbey—John S. Sargent—Henry James in 1885—Randolph Caldecott—Artist *versus* Editor

CHAPTER XVIII
SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER
1886 Aged 33–34
Abbey in New York—A London Welcome—J. R. Osgood—Howard Pyle—An Artist's Education—First Sight of Fairford—C. S. Reinhart—Henry James on Abbey—Austin Dobson's Prologue to *She Stoops to Conquer*—The Goldsmith Drawings

CHAPTER XIX
THE COMMISSION FOR THE "COMEDIES" AND PUBLICATION OF *OLD SONGS*
1887–1888 Aged 34–36
The Sketching Club—Fred Barnard—Responsibilities of an Illustrator of Shakespeare—Theories of Illustration—Authors and their Illustrators—Sir Walter Besant—Charles Keene—Preparations for Shakespeare—An Italian Journey—A New Studio—A First London Exhibition—*Old Songs*—John Hay—George du Maurier

CHAPTER XX
A NEW FRIEND AND *THE QUIET LIFE*
1889 Aged 36–37
Miss Mead—Introspective Letters—Art and Nationality—Aspirations and Attempts—Solitary Work and London Recreations—Departure for New York—*The Quiet Life*—Austin Dobson

CHAPTER XXI
BEGINNING OF THE "COMEDIES"
1889 (*concluded*) Aged 37
A Fortnight in New York—Further Letters to Miss Mead—Studies from Nature—The "May-Day Morning"—The "Minstrel" Motif—Colarossi, the Model—A Visit to Mr. Sargent at Fladbury—The Costumes for *La Tosca*

CHAPTER XXII
MARRIAGE
1890 Aged 38
Abbey Again in New York—Friendly Feastings—A Dinner to Charles Parsons—The Wedding

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XXIII
AN ACKNOWLEDGED MASTER

Taking Stock—Henry James on Abbey—The Paris Exhibition—A French Critic—Meissonier and Edmond de Goncourt—Pennell's *Pen Drawing and Pen Draughtsmanship*—The Masters of Modern Illustration—Menzel and Abbey—Beginning of the " Comedies "

CHAPTER XXIV
THE BOSTON LIBRARY COMMISSION
1890 Aged 38

Another Critical Year—The Boston Public Library—Charles Follen McKim—St. Gaudens—Abbey Becomes a Mural Painter—First Ideas for a Frieze—" The Quest of the Holy Grail "—A Twelve Years' Task

CHAPTER XXV
ITALIAN TRAVEL AND AN ENGLISH HOME
1890–1891 Aged 38–39

First Academy Picture—Wandering in England—Fairford and Lechlade—*The Deserted Village*—Morgan Hall—Charles Keene—Italian Travel—Domenico Morelli—Amalfi and Ravello—Raphael's " Jurisprudence "—An Artist's Ideal—Settlement at Morgan Hall—Mrs. Mead—J. S. Sargent—C. F. McKim—The Largest Studio in England

CHAPTER XXVI
WORK AND TRAVEL
1892–1893 Aged 39–41

Advice to Art Students—Progress With the Boston Frieze and Shakespeare—American Historical Projects—Alma Tadema—St. Gaudens—The Bayreuth Festival—The Lure of Rothenburg—A Stained-glass Window—John Pettie—A Feat of Painting—Venice—Carpaccio—A Boccaccio Room—Gondoliers at Chicago—*Midsummer Night's Dream* and end of the " Comedies "—Henry James

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS VOLUME I.

A CHARCOAL STUDY OF E. A. ABBEY, BY J. S. SARGENT, R.A. Frontispiece
THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF E. A. ABBEY From a Daguerreotype facing page 2
E. A. ABBEY, A TWO-YEAR-OLD BABY, WITH PENCIL From a Daguerreotype . 4
E. A. AND W. B. ABBEY AND THEIR GRANDMOTHER From a Daguerreotype . 6
FROM A SKETCH MADE IN PHILADELPHIA circa 1863 . . . . page 8
E. A. ABBEY'S PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS From a Daguerreotype facing page 12
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . page 16
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . „ 21
E. A. ABBEY'S FIRST AND SECOND DRAWINGS FOR *HARPER'S MAGAZINE* facing page 26
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . page 27
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . „ 32
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . „ 42
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . „ 48
EDWIN A. ABBEY From a Photograph circa 1878 . . . . facing page 58
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . page 61
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . „ 68
FROM A SKETCH IN A LETTER . . . . . „ 81
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . „ 96
FROM SKETCH IN A LETTER . . . . . „ 99
TO MEDDOWES . . . . . facing page 100
CORINNA'S GOING A MAYING . . . Two Illustrations . . 106
A BEUCOLIC, OR DISCOURSE OF NEATHERDS 109
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . page 114
THE WIDOWER . . . . . facing page 125
THE MILKMAID 128
STONY GROUND 131
THE LADIES OF ST. JAMES'S 134
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . page 135
MISS HARDCASTLE AND MISS NEVILLE. "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER" facing page 136
MARLOW AND HASTINGS. "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER" 136
MISS NEVILLE AND HASTINGS. "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER" . . . 136
MRS. HARDCASTLE AND HASTINGS. "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER" . . 138
MISS HARDCASTLE AND MARLOW. "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER" . . 140
JUDITH SHAKESPEARE 143
AN OLD SONG . . . . . facing page 145
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . page 146
FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM RANDOLPH CALDICOTT . facing page 146
LIKE MY LORD PATELEY 148
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . page 153
MRS. HARDCASTLE, MISS NEVILLE AND TONY LUMPKIN. "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER" . . . . . facing page 154

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MISS HARDCASTLE AND MARLOW. "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER" facing page 156
MISS HARDCASTLE, MARLOW, SIR CHARLES AND HARDCASTLE. "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER" 156
SALLY IN OUR ALLEY: "OF ALL THE DAYS THAT'S IN THE WEEK." "OLD SONGS" 159
SALLY IN OUR ALLEY: "MY MASTER CARRIES ME TO CHURCH" . . 159
SALLY IN OUR ALLEY: "WHEN CHRISTMAS COMES ABOUT AGAIN" . 159
"TONY LUMPKIN IS HIS OWN MAN AGAIN." "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER" 162
MRS. HARDCASTLE, MISS NEVILLE, TONY AND HASTINGS. "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER" 163
"WITH JOCKEY TO THE FAIR." "OLD SONGS" 164
"AH ME! WHEN SHALL I MARRY ME?" "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER" . 167
"SWEET NELLY, MY HEART'S DELIGHT." "OLD SONGS" 168
"HARVEST HOME." "OLD SONGS" 170
SUNBURNED FOLK THAT STAND AT GAZE. "QUIET LIFE" . . . 172
QUINCE. "QUIET LIFE" 172
"HERE'S TO THE MAIDEN OF BASHFUL FIFTEEN." "OLD SONGS" . . 174
EXEUNT SALARINO AND SOLANIO. "MERCHANT OF VENICE" . . 176
"MISLIKE ME NOT FOR MY COMPLEXION." "MERCHANT OF VENICE" 176
"AWAY THEN; I AM LOCKED IN ONE OF THEM." "MERCHANT OF VENICE" 176
JESSICA AND LORENZO. "MERCHANT OF VENICE" 176
FALSTAFF AND MISTRESS QUICKLY. "MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR" . 178
FACSIMILE SKETCH BY GEORGE DU MAURIER IN LETTER TO E. A. ABBEY . . . . . page 180
FROM ABBEY'S SKETCH BOOK . . . . . „ 181
FALSTAFF: "BARDOLPH, FOLLOW HIM: A TAPSTER IS A GOOD TRADE" facing page 187
SLENDER: "WHY DO YOUR DOGS BARK SO?" "MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR" 190
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . page 195
THE DUKE AND FRIAR THOMAS. "MEASURE FOR MEASURE" facing page 200
ANGELO AND ISABELLA. "MEASURE FOR MEASURE" 202
CLAUDIO AND ISABELLA. "MEASURE FOR MEASURE" 202
E. A. ABBEY, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY HAROLD ROLLER 205
THE VILLAGE MASTER. "DESERTED VILLAGE" 206
ADRIANA, LUCIANA, ANTIPHOLUS EROTES, DROMIO OF SYRACUSE. "THE COMEDY OF ERRORS" 212
IN THE FOREST OF ARDEN 214
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . page 215
MAY DAY MORNING . . . . . facing page 216
THE WANDERING MINSTREL . . . . . facing page 219
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . page 226
MEDALLION PORTRAIT OF M. G. MEAD (MRS. E. A. ABBEY), BY AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS . . . . . facing page 228

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

KING ARTHUR'S ROUND TABLE, BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY . . . 232
CHARCOAL STUDY FOR KING ARTHUR'S ROUND TABLE 232
DEPARTURE OF THE KNIGHTS ON THE QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL . 232
STUDY OF A JESTER 234
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . page 237
THE VILLAGE PREACHER. "DESERTED VILLAGE" . . facing page 238
"THE MIDNIGHT MASQUERADE." "DESERTED VILLAGE" . . . 238
"THERE THE PALE ARTIST PLIES THE SICKLY TRADE" 238
"SIGH NO MORE, LADIES." "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING" . . . 240
DOGBERRY AND HIS COMPARTNER WITH THE WATCH. "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING" 240
"WHERE SHOULD THIS MUSIC BE?" "THE TEMPEST" 242
THE BANQUET. "THE TEMPEST" 244
"FOR YOU ARE SPELL-STOPP'D." "THE TEMPEST" 244
"WHY THEN, YOUNG BERTRAM, TAKE HER; SHE'S THY WIFE." "ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL" 246
THE DUKE AND VALENTINE. "TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA" . . 246
"WHO IS SILVIA? WHAT IS SHE?" "TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA" . 246
"AND EVERY PANG THAT FOLLY PAYS TO PRIDE." "DESERTED VILLAGE" 247
"IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE, PLAY ON." "TWELFTH NIGHT" . 248
OLIVIA, CLOWN AND MALVOLIO. "TWELFTH NIGHT" 248
MARIA, CLOWN, SIR TOBY BELCH AND SIR ANDREW AGUE-CHEEK. "TWELFTH NIGHT" 248
"COME AWAY, COME AWAY, DEATH." "TWELFTH NIGHT" . . . 248
"FAIR PRINCESS, WELCOME TO THE COURT OF NAVARRE." "LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST" 250
ARMADO AND MOTH. "LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST" 250
DULL, SIR NATHANIEL, HOLOFERNES. "LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST" . 250
FROM A SKETCH BOOK . . . . . page 251
"BUT FOR MY BONNY KATE, SHE MUST WITH ME." "THE TAMING OF THE SHREW" . . . . . facing page 252
"'TWAS I WON THE WAGER." "THE TAMING OF THE SHREW" . . 252
MORGAN HALL, FAIRFORD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE: 1. EAST FRONT; 2. WEST FRONT 254
"AWAY WITH HER TO PRISON." "WINTER'S TALE" 256
THE ORACLE PROFANED. "WINTER'S TALE" 256
AN OLD SHEPHERD AND HIS SON. "WINTER'S TALE" 256
AUTOLYCUS AT THE SHEEP SHEARING. "WINTER'S TALE" . . . 256
THE MARRIAGE MORNING OF THESEUS AND HIPPOLYTA. "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM" 262
"WHY DO THEY RUN AWAY?" "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM" . . 262
THE RE-ENTRANCE OF THE PLAYERS. "MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM" . 262
EDWIN AUSTIN ABBEY, DRAWN BY G. F. WATTS, R.A., Aet. 41 . . . 267

CHAPTER I

BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

1852–1868 Aged 1–16

Roswell Abbey (Abbey's Paternal Grandfather)—William Maxwell Abbey—Huguenot Descent—Abbey's Maternal Ancestors—A Wiltshire Family—Black and White at Two Years Old—Schools in Philadelphia—First Instruction in Art—" Oliver Optic's " *Our Boys and Girls*—Will H. Low and his Boy Colleague

EDWIN AUSTIN ABBEY was born at 315 Race Street, Philadelphia, on April 1st, 1852. The house still stands, but it has been altered within.

His father, William Maxwell Abbey (1826–1897), was a Philadelphian of English and French extraction, who, after engaging in various forms of business, had settled down to brokerage and commission agency. He was the fifth child of Roswell Abbey (1789–1858), a typefounder, who spent much of his spare time on the invention of new mechanism not only for printing but for larger engineering purposes. Roswell Abbey was the first to apply electrotyping to the production of the matrices used in typefounding, and he devoted years in an attempt to perfect an engine driven by compressed gas—an explosion during one of his experiments causing the injury that led to his death. From Roswell Abbey, beyond doubt, came much of his grandson Edwin's practical adaptivity and his swift, decisive manipulative gifts. Writing of his grandfather in later life Abbey, who admired him immensely, says that he was an unworldly man, a constant dupe of the crafty, and that he left a fine library.

Roswell Abbey, a New Englander by birth, came from Amherst, Massachusetts, and did not settle in Philadelphia, where he was greatly respected, until 1831, to leave it again only for two years, in 1844–46. His father, Samuel Abbey (1755 or 1760–1841), was from Chatham, Connecticut, but also had associations with Philadelphia, for he served there for a while in Captain Coach's Company of Colonel Burr Bradley's Battalion of the Connecticut Line. On retiring from the army Samuel Abbey settled first at Amherst, Mas-

sachusetts, then at Canandaigua, N.Y., and finally at Milo, Yates County, N.Y.

Farther back than this Samuel Abbey we cannot go, with any certainty, on the paternal side; but it was believed in the family that his right name was Abbaye, which he had changed to Abbey, and that he was descended from Huguenot *émigrés* who came to America from England. Abbey the artist, the subject of the present book, while proud of this French strain, from time to time was interested in efforts that were made to link up his family also with Abbeys in England; but he could arrive at nothing very definite. Among his papers I find correspondence on the subject, and a copy of the will of William de Abbey, citizen of York, which was drawn up on July 15th, 1334.

So much for the paternal line. Abbey's mother was Margery Ann Kiple (born November 17th, 1825, in Buckingham, died April 15th, 1880), daughter of Jacob Kiple (1800–1889), of Buckingham, Buck. Co., Pennsylvania, the son of Jacob Kiple or Kypel (d. 1824), who in turn was the son of a Jacob Kypel (d. 1797), of Freiburg, Baden. This, the earliest member of the Kiple family of whom anything is known, emigrated from Germany to America in 1760, and settled in Hunterdon, New Jersey. Jacob Kiple married, on January 3rd, 1823, Jane Clancy, who was born in Chester Co., Pennsylvania, on July 2nd, 1802, and died in Philadelphia on January 17th, 1889. She was the daughter of John Clancy and Margery Ferguson, both of Irish descent.*

Margery Ann Kiple was married to William Maxwell Abbey in 1848, and they had three children: Edwin Austin, born, as I have stated, April 1st, 1852; William Burling, born December 17th, 1854, and Jane Kiple, born April 16th, 1858. Of these only the last, who became a confirmed invalid, survives. William Burling Abbey died in 1917, only a few months after his only son, Edwin Austin Abbey the second, named after his uncle, was killed at the

* "My grandmother" (Mr. J. E. Kelly thus quotes a remark made to him by Abbey) "was one of the young girls who greeted Washington and strewed flowers in his path when he journeyed to New York to be inaugurated as first President." As this was in 1787, Abbey must have meant great-grandmother, but we cannot know which one was indicated, maternal or paternal.

THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF E. A. ABBEY.

FROM A DAGUERREOTYPE.

battle of Vimy Ridge in France, where he is buried. Although an American, he had enlisted with the Canadian forces in October, 1915, long before America joined in, and was gazetted a Lieutenant.*

On his mother's side Abbey was remotely of German and Irish descent. Any failure to derive his father's family from England was made good by the unequivocal English blood of his paternal grandmother's line. This lady, the wife of Roswell Abbey, was Elizabeth Truslow (1790-1863), the daughter of John Truslow, of Durham, Connecticut, whose family hailed from Avebury in Wiltshire. In Abbey's veins, therefore, ran English, French, German, and Irish blood.

Almost immediately after Edwin—or Ned, as he was called all his life by those with whom he was most intimate—was born, the family moved to Ellicott's Mill, Maryland, where Mr. Abbey had heard of a business opening; but they were back in Philadelphia after a year. They lived then at 609 North 5th Street, a house which, the street having been since renumbered, must now be sought at either 971 or 973; and afterwards moved into 816 North 6th Street, where they remained for some three years. Later there was another move, to 321 Vine Street, and in 1865 to 830 North 6th Street, Abbey's last and longest Philadelphian home, and the house from which, as we shall see, he set forth to earn his living in New York.

A letter to him, in 1901, from a lady who remembered him as a very small child and wished, in his later triumphant days, to felicitate with him on his success, tells of very early artistic efforts. "If I also were an artist," she wrote, "I would draw you a picture of a two-year-old baby sitting in a high chair with pencil and paper, drawing omnibuses. On the opposite side of the room a lady embroidering; close beside the baby a little girl attentively watching the baby artist, ever ready to obey the demand of 'More paper, Emma,' and to hunt and sharpen lost pencils. The baby was your-

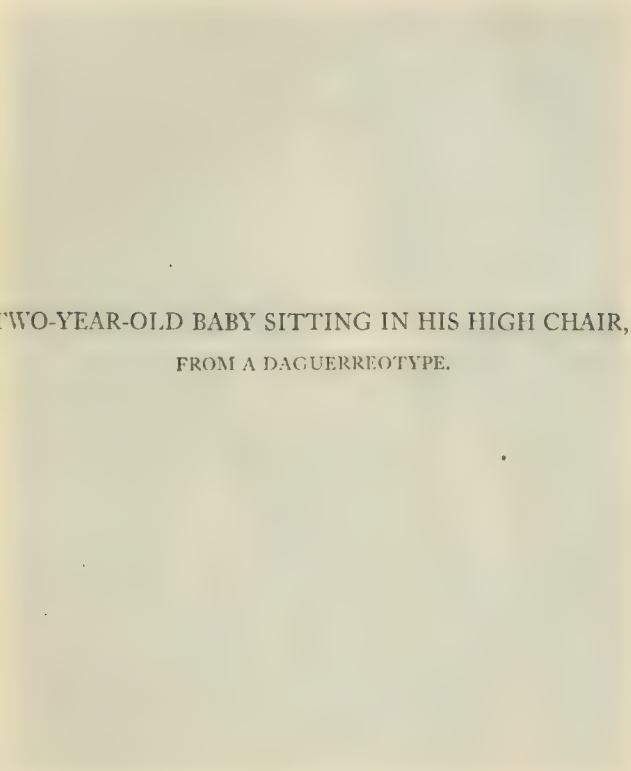
* In 1918 a collection of letters written by E. A. Abbey the second, to his parents, from camp and from the Flanders and French fronts, was published by the Houghton Mifflin Co., under the title : *An American Soldier*.

self, the lady was your mother, and the little girl was I." To delineate omnibuses at two is to exceed the precocity even of that other Philadelphian painter (who was to become not only R.A. but P.R.A.), Benjamin West, who, it will be remembered, as a small boy did not wait for the attentions of any Emma, but himself pulled hair from the cat's tail to make a brush.

The only other incident of Abbey's childhood that I can recover is one of which he himself used often to tell. Having contracted a habit of dealing more daintily with his food than his mother thought well for a little boy, he was admonished by her, before accompanying her on a visit to some relatives, to remember his manners, and in their house, at any rate, on no account to pick and choose. Nor did he. A glass of milk being given him with, all unknown to the giver, a large fly struggling in it, he was for postponing the refreshment; but on a nudge from his mother, who also had not seen what her son was only too conscious of, he dutifully drank it down, fly and all.

The first school which Abbey and his brother attended was at the south-east corner of Green and Dillwyn Streets, kept by Mrs. Elizabeth Hall. That was between 1859, when Ned was seven, and 1862. The two boys then moved on to the Randolph and the Jefferson, two of Philadelphia's public schools, and in 1864 to Henry Gregory's at 1108 Harbel Street. Gregory, who afterwards became Vice-President of Girard College, was assisted by his son, till lately a Professor at the University of Leipsic; by De Benneville K. Ludwig, who became principal of the Rittenhouse Academy; and by the late Gerald F. Dale, who died as a missionary in India.

In a letter written in 1907 to Mr. G. H. Putnam, in relation to some misleading statements which had found their way into print, and to which we shall come later, Abbey wrote thus of these early days: "My mother was a very well-read woman, who, early in my life, as long as my memory goes back, did what she could to develop and guide my tastes—primarily my literary tastes. She carefully preserved my childish essays in drawing, but this predilection of mine amounted to nothing until I was fifteen or sixteen years of age. My father, who was then engaged in an agency for yellow pine tim-



E. A. ABBEY, A TWO-YEAR-OLD BABY SITTING IN HIS HIGH CHAIR, WITH PENCIL.

FROM A DAGUERREOTYPE.

ber and tobacco, naturally suffered much from the war financially. But although he was a poor man he always managed to buy good books, and he sent my brother and myself to what was considered the best classical school in Philadelphia at that time (Henry D. Gregory's), hoping that we should enter the University of Pennsylvania and adopt a profession. This my brother did. I was a disappointment as a schoolboy."

To what extent it was a blow to Mr. and Mrs. Abbey that their son could not take up the calling of a minister in the Episcopal Church, of which they were members, I cannot say; but they seem to have thrown themselves into his alternative and more congenial career very warmly. "On Saturdays," he says in the same letter, "from the time I was fourteen years old, I went to the studio of an old landscape painter to take drawing lessons. I was never a clever student, but all this time my mother was steadily directing my reading and interesting herself in my artistic development." The landscape painter was Isaac L. Williams, who, having been born in 1817, was at that time, *circa* 1866, only forty-nine, but to the eyes of fourteen forty-nine can be tragically venerable. He lived to merit his pupil's adjective more thoroughly, surviving until 1895. Except for a brief visit to Europe, Williams spent his whole life in Philadelphia—in his earlier days painting portraits and in his latter country scenes.

Nothing that Abbey did under Isaac Williams' tuition has been preserved, but we know that he had to copy unexciting landscapes by this Master, and that he detested the operation. There are, however, extant various examples of a more frivolous development of his artistic energy at this time, and we have the advantage of being able to draw upon the memory of another American artist and very early friend of Abbey's—Mr. Will H. Low—in order to see a little more of his boyish days. In an address delivered on February 12th, 1912, before the Contemporary Club at Philadelphia, in honour of two distinguished members recently dead—Edwin Austin Abbey and Howard Pyle—Mr. Low said: "It is a far call back to 1867, when the name of Ned Abbey first swam into

my ken. It was not under that name, however, that I first knew him. I was a small boy in Albany, devoted, as were most of my generation, to the literature of 'Oliver Optic,' and was a subscriber to his magazine. Included in the varied contents of this magazine was a department called 'Our Letter-Box,' which had tempted my youthful pen to write, to send illustrated rebuses, and to confide descriptions of my kiddish activities to the sympathetic ear of its editor. I was soon rewarded by seeing my name in print, or rather the name I had chosen, 'Ned Sketchley'; some of my proffered contributions were printed; and, highest reward of all, the great 'Oliver Optic' wrote me a charming personal letter, which was soon followed by his stopping, when passing through Albany on a journey westward, to see me. Soon after came a definite triumph, for the great man dedicated one of his books to me."

Mr. Low's reminiscences may be interrupted here to say that "Oliver Optic" was in real life William T. Adams (1822–1897), a Boston schoolmaster, who edited *Our Boys and Girls* and wrote more than a hundred good-humoured and healthy books for children. And now we return to Mr. Low: "At the period when these honours were showered upon me I saw frequently in the correspondence department of *Our Boys and Girls* figure the name of 'Yorick.' Soon after I received, through the intermediary of 'Oliver Optic,' a letter duly addressed to 'Ned Sketchley,' and from it I learned that 'Yorick' screened the personality of one Edwin A. Abbey, who resided in Philadelphia. There then ensued a frequent correspondence. I wish that I could now lay my hands on some of those early letters, and, above all, on some of the drawings with which, to the number sometimes of a dozen, they were laden. They have all disappeared, as I reluctantly assured myself not long ago, but at one time I must have been in possession of the largest collection of Abbey's works that has ever been gathered together. We wrote assiduously, and I learned that our life stories, so far as they had then proceeded, were very similar. We criticised each other's work. I still remember keenly his demand: 'I wish you would send me some decent sketches,' to which I probably replied in kind.

E. A. ABBEY, W. B. ABBEY AND THEIR MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER.

FROM A DAGUERREOTYPE.

"Finally I wearied of this long-distance communication, and, the consent of my indulgent parents having been obtained, I wrote my friend an invitation to come and visit at my home in Albany. This he did, but first it was necessary that we should provide some means of recognising each other, for it was planned that I should go down on the day boat on the Hudson and meet him at Poughkeepsie upon the boat which was coming up the river on the same day. I have forgotten the details of the plan I devised, but it was effective, and we had no difficulty in our mutual recognition.

"In Albany he found company to his liking. With two boyish comrades a sketching club had been formed, and not long ago I found a list inscribed: 'RAMBLER SKETCH CLUB. *Members:* Walter L. Palmer, Herbert M. Lawrence, Will. H. Low. *Hon. Members:* Oliver Optic, Edwin A. Abbey.'

"Walter L. Palmer (b. 1854) is, of course, now well known as a painter of snowy landscapes, and Herbert Lawrence has since done much good interior decoration of an ornamental character.*

"My first visit to Philadelphia soon followed, and the hospitality of Abbey's parents was as freely bestowed upon me as his own winning disposition had made him welcome in my home by mine. In his company we haunted the permanent collection of pictures in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and he took me to the studio of one of the resident painters, named Isaac Williams. . . ."

Before leaving "Oliver Optic's" share in Abbey's artistic beginnings, it should be said that after Abbey's death there was some correspondence in the New York *Sun* on his contributions to *Our Boys and Girls*, suggesting that he may have had two pseudonyms. "Salt Point," who had also been one of the contributors to the Rebus department, and who had met Mr. Adams not long before his death, wrote thus: "The old gentleman remembered my name and pen name and, though then over seventy, called off the names and pen names of many others. It was then for the first time, of course, that I knew that 'Rusticus' of *Our Boys and Girls* was Edwin

* Mr. Palmer, who still lives at Albany, possesses a little sketch-book into which he pasted drawings made by Abbey in those early days. Most of them are dated 1868.

A. Abbey." This letter brought another from "L.G.," Cincinnati, of which the larger part follows: "Seeing the letter in *The Sun* from 'Salt Point' in regard to Edwin Austin Abbey, I am prompted to send you some first-hand information about the artist's first attempts. We two were both contributors to *Oliver Optic's Magazine*, he as 'Yorick' and I as 'Wide Awake.' An extensive correspondence sprang up between us. My first visit to Philadelphia from my Brooklyn home as a sixteen-year old boy was to see Abbey, who took me to all the historic places, and I can see us now standing before the iron paling and looking at Franklin's grave. Abbey was jolly and hospitable. His letters were always profusely illustrated with pen-and-ink sketches, mostly humorous, which I would give much to possess now."

Ned remained at Dr. Gregory's school until June, 1868, when he was sixteen, and not long after was sent to study penmanship for three months under Richard S. Dickson.

So much for the first phase of his life.

CHAPTER II
FIRST WORK AND THE PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY

1868–1871 Aged 16–18

Willard P. Snyder's Recollections—A Young Editor—Enthusiasm for Dickens—Professor Schussele—A Student at the Pennsylvania Academy—The Pre-Raphaelites—Arthur Boyd Houghton—Favourite Reading—Early Drawings

THE second phase of Abbey's career began in 1868, when, at the age of sixteen, he entered the firm of Van Ingen and Snyder to learn the art and mystery of drawing on wood for illustrating, the intention of his father being that the boy should be apprenticed there until he was twenty-one. The indentures, perhaps fortunately, were, however, not executed, and the youth was thus left free to listen to the call of New York, when, not long after, it sounded.

The earliest of the recollections of Abbey, which very kindly have been written for this book by certain of his early friends, are those of Mr. Willard P. Snyder, son of one of the partners in the firm, and Ned's exact contemporary. "I first met Edwin A. Abbey," he says, "when he was sixteen. He was seated at a drawing table in the office and not with the general staff of engravers in the larger room, for his talents were already showing to exceptional advantage in other channels. His work was to make drawings for school books, geographies, readers, and spellers; while an endless chain of Sunday School-book MSS. passed through his hands. Another part of his work was to read the galley proofs and select the incidents for illustration. Some he himself drew, others were given out to the artists on the staff. In this way he acted in the capacity of what may be termed an Art Editor." To be so soon entrusted with such responsible duties as these shows us that the sagacity which distinguished Abbey throughout his life was of early growth and even at sixteen was duly appreciated by those about him.

Mr. Snyder continues: "The illustrated English journals were at hand in the office, and he was soon busy showing them to me. We

were both at home with the men and their work, and conversation went apace. . . . Before our first interview came to an end his pencil was moving over a blank sheet of paper on his drawing board. In a short while it was overflowing with images and a sense of life. I saw Chinamen, negroes, a mendicant, and a parson; then came Uriah Heep, cringing and crafty, finally Mr. Pickwick, beaming and very rotund, standing on a chair. It all came instinctively and without apparent effort, full of easy gestures and simple piquancy, a dazzling caprice of fancy. He began by placing the eyes first, with full emphasis, the other features followed in the finest hair lines, as well as the general outline; the mouth and a lock of hair would receive some extra strength, and the work was done. It was plainly seen that his mind was boring deeper than a mere effect of line or colour, for there appeared first of all human emotion, with the elemental law of contrast everywhere in evidence as a vital point." —This memory of the Dickens illustrations is interesting in helping us to the knowledge of the boy's literary tastes, too. All his life Abbey was much under the dominion of Dickens, who, to a large extent, in those early days, stood for England, and intensified the English lure.

Here let me interpose Mr. Snyder's portrait of Abbey at seventeen: "In appearance he was short and possessed unusual physical beauty, the body and limbs formed for strength and symmetry, the head and features were of the classical type and well poised on a round, full neck; the complexion fine and clear, eyes brown beneath brows low and firm; hair of a neutral warm tone, neither light nor dark, thick and slightly curling above the ears. There was an irresistible effect about his appearance that drew people to him. His habits were those of a youth of an established family, and in all things, under all circumstances, he acted wisely. There was something of decision and reserved energy in his whole being. His nerves were always calm, although within him was stored the warmth of sunshine."

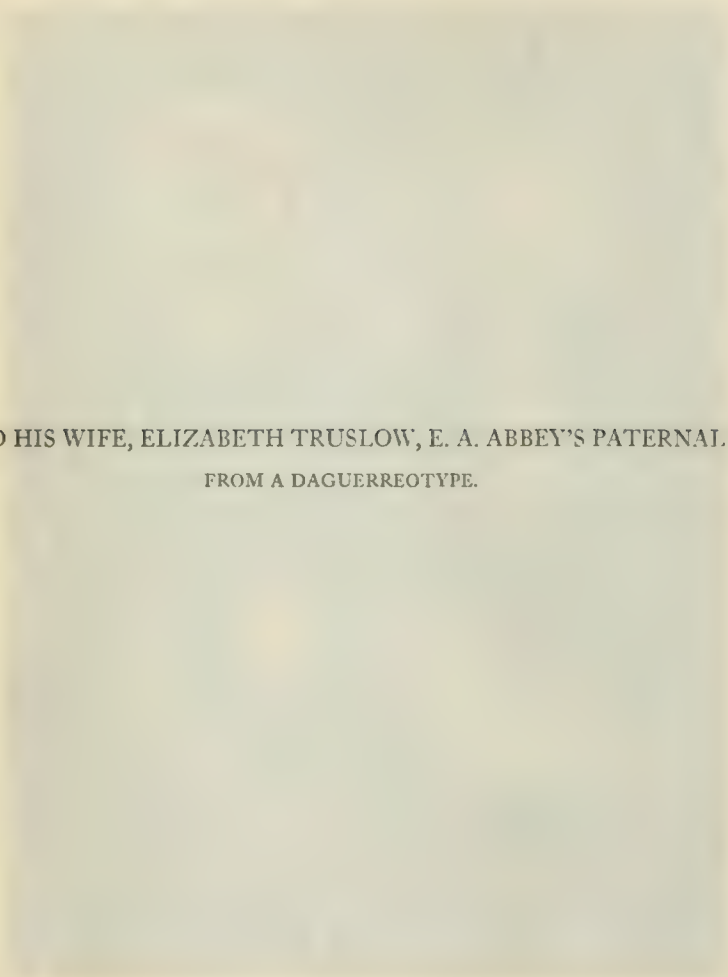
The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts had at that time as director an Alsatian artist, Professor Schussele, and it was de-

cided that Abbey, by becoming a student in the night class, should have the benefit of more scientific tuition than Isaac Williams had imparted. Mr. Snyder, who, as a youth, joined him in this enterprise, again supplies reminiscences. "The Academy was situated up a broad alley opening from Chestnut Street. There was a high iron gate at the entrance, and the front of the Academy presented the appearance of a Roman Doric temple, a long broad flight of steps leading up to the entrance. After passing in through the vestibule and signing your name on the register, you were in the rotunda, a large high room. From the dome above, the light fell on the colossal group entitled 'The Battle of the Centaurs.' This piece of statuary was directly in the centre of the rotunda, and a low bench covered with cushions formed a sweeping circle around it. There [on the day of the two boys' introductory visit] we sat down to await the coming of Professor Schussele. To fill in the time we looked about at the large paintings on the walls, the busts of Roman Emperors and the marble statues on pedestals; while over it all there was a stillness: the smallest noise made an echo; it all seemed majestic. Abbey pointed out one master and another to me, and used a modulated tone; and I did the same in replying to him.

"Before very long a middle-aged gentleman approached who resembled Shakespeare; he came steadily toward us with fixed attention, one leg dragging slightly, as he had had a stroke of paralysis and used a cane for assistance. After the letter had been presented, he asked to see our work. Abbey had a composition to show. There were several Puritans and Indians in the composition; it was done in pencil and sepia wash, on buff watercolour paper, with Chinese white for the high lights. [I fancy it must have been an early version of the first *Harper's Weekly* drawing, described a little later.] The Professor was impressed and took considerable time in examining the subject. He told us to report to the Antique Class for instruction. Professor Schussele, I should note in passing, stood as a thoroughly trained exponent of the academic school of France. He taught the importance of truth, of going to nature for all things, even to the accessory data necessary to make a complete expression

of an idea, holding that it was only by following these lines that the picture could be made convincing. Abbey received instruction freely and was in perfect accord with the teaching up to that point, but when it came to seriously studying the antique I was aware in him of a lack of interest. I often wondered why the spirit of the class did not move him, for all about he saw men and women making clever, bold studies from the antique; but he appeared more in the attitude of an observer than one of the class. I do not remember that he ever made a complete drawing in the class. . . . In the Life Class at the Academy he did more work, although I never knew him to make an earnest effort to make what the student would term a 'study.' While the members of the class were busy giving the best they could to one point of view he would perhaps be busy with a dozen sketches, some of them simply a part of the figure. For example, I have seen him devote considerable attention to the forearm and hand, with particular drawing of the veins and masses of hair on the back of a hand. At the best his attendance was not regular, but he always had a composition to show, sometimes several."

As to these compositions, Abbey's brother remembered that among the subjects were "Perseus Rescuing Andromeda," "The Crowning of the Emperor Nero," "The Journey of the Queen of Sheba," and a scene from *Macbeth*. In order to fit himself to cope with the difficulties of costume and so forth, Abbey joined the Mercantile Library and became a very assiduous reader. Mr. Snyder tells how he frequently found him there. "His memory was retentive, with a prehensile faculty to an unusual degree; he could look through a book and get the vital points of interest just as clearly as the fluorescent screen shows the coin in the pocket-book under the X-ray conditions. It was not his habit to sit with a book for any length of time; it was not necessary for him to do so, since he had other and more direct methods." At this period not only was the foundation laid of Abbey's remarkable store of information, but he began to nourish his instinct, which later became very remarkable, as a reader. It is one thing to have a library; it is quite



ROSWELL ABBEY AND HIS WIFE, ELIZABETH TRUSLOW, E. A. ABBEY'S PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS

FROM A DAGUERREOTYPE.

another to know what it contains and to be able to go straight to the right spot. This was very noticeably Abbey's gift. He used books as though they were tools.

Apropos of that early reading, in a letter to his future wife, many years later, Abbey recalls a period during these days when he was under the influence of Haydon's *Autobiography*. "What a fusty, fudgy place," he says, "that Philadelphia Academy was in my day! The trail of Rembrandt Peale and of Charles Leslie, of Benjamin West, and all the dismal persons who thought themselves 'Old Masters,' was over the place, and the worthy young men who caught colds in that dank basement with me, and who slumbered peacefully by my side during long anatomical lectures all thought the only thing worth doing was the grand business, the 'High Art' that Haydon was always raving about; and in my mild, willing way, I rather believed it, too, because I was told it, and contributed to the composition class my ideas of 'Solomon in all his glory' going out for his daily drive in the park of the period, of 'Moses watching Laban's flock,' and so on, and so on." But Haydon's rule was brief, weakening almost at once and disappearing (as Abbey explains in the same letter), when he came, in the *Illustrated London News*, on the artist's demonstration of the correctness of the drawing in his picture of Curtius leaping into the gulf: a loss of confidence which was only too completely justified when, on coming to London, Abbey saw the original painting.

We must consider it more than a happy chance that led the boy to Schussele's care, to be so early set on his true course. He himself thought so too. When, on February 2nd, 1908, the Academy of Fine Arts at Philadelphia conferred its Gold Medal of Honour upon him, Abbey wrote thus to the President, Mr. E. H. Coates, concerning his early training there: "An exile from my native town for some twenty-eight years, I still cherish deeply the memory of the days and evenings I passed at the Academy of the Fine Arts—in those days in a transition state. I have seen a great deal since then—and heard artistic theories propounded without number—but the science of constructive drawing as taught by Mr. Schussele re-

mains clearly with me, and is, in my opinion, as thorough and right as a method can be. I have endeavoured through all these years to carry out his theory (I have never studied under any other master), and whatever of shortcomings is said to be laid at my door—and alas! I fear this is not a little—I can truthfully say that I owe whatever of science I have to the groundwork of advice I had at Mr. Schussele's hands. It is the more gratifying, therefore, that my old school has paid me the compliment of which your letter advises me, and I beg to assure you that among the honours that have fallen to my share this testimonial will hold a cherished place."

A powerful influence at this time was that of the Pre-Raphaelites. "Abbey's conversations," Mr. Snyder continues, "were in large part about the Pre-Raphaelite school and the leaders in England. The movement there had gained great momentum, and in the whirlpool of discussion Holman Hunt and Rossetti were the vortices of interest. This circumstance drew him to their cause: he was in full accord with their doctrines. Hunt, Rossetti and Millais were names he mentioned constantly, but when he spoke of Rossetti, it was always Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in full—of his great power and the unconventional treatment of his compositions. To a large degree the romantic element in his writings had a deep influence, and nearly everything that Rossetti wrote he accepted without reservation. To show how thoroughly he absorbed the doctrines of the Pre-Raphaelites, on one occasion he took me expressly to see an illustration by Houghton in an English magazine; the title was 'The Four Disciples.' There I saw the possible truth from the Pre-Raphaelite viewpoint. The long hair was unkempt and matted over their foreheads, their faces were pinched with suffering; deep shadows lay under their hollow, burning eyes; they were dishevelled and in rags. The drawing was done in a masterful way. It was compelling and made an impression that was enduring. Abbey contended that the viewpoint was justifiable, as it was the simple truth."

Of Houghton we find a passage in a letter from Abbey to Mr. M. H. Spielmann, many years after, from which further quotations will be made later. "I remember," he says, referring to the Art

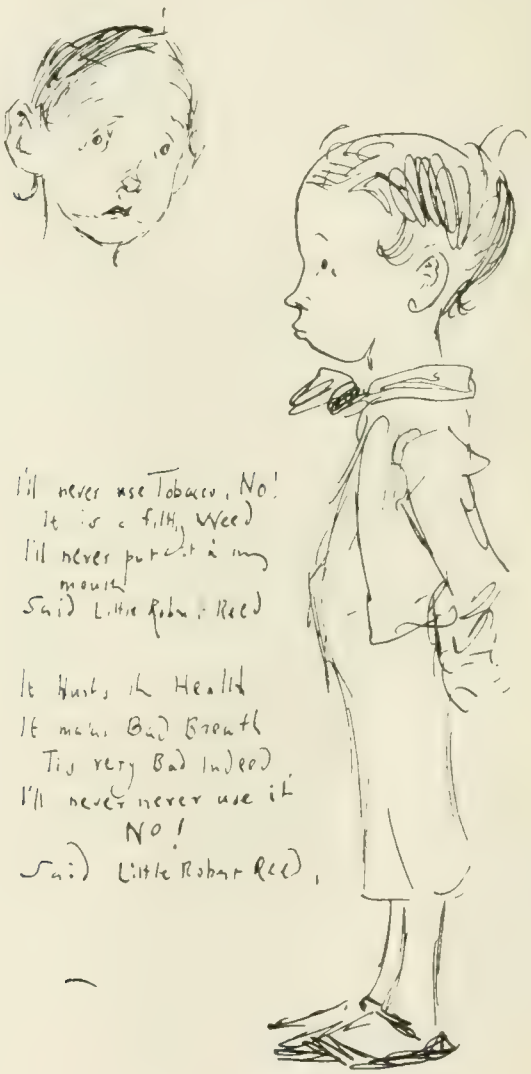
Department of *Harper's Magazine* and *Weekly*, "Boyd Houghton coming in and hearing that he had brought all his boxwood with him; and it lingers in my memory that it was screwed together with brass screws (ours were steel or iron). The quality of boxwood made a good deal of difference, you know; if you drew a face or a hand on a spongy bit it had to be plugged, and it was very difficult to draw on the plugged bit. Houghton must have been on his way home, for I remember one, at least, of his drawings before I ever went to Harper's. I remember sticking up for it at the Academy School in Philadelphia in the face of much opposition—a picture of some Western children and toboggans. I remember, too, Elder Evans of the Shakers coming down there and kicking up a row about Houghton's picture of him, which had been reprinted in *Harper's Weekly*."—Arthur Boyd Houghton was a powerful draughtsman, somewhat severe in temperament, who is best known for his edition of *The Arabian Nights*. He also illustrated *Don Quixote*, but most of his work is buried in the files of *Once a Week*, *Fun*, the *Graphic*, and other periodicals. He was born in 1836, and died in 1875.

Another passage in Mr. Snyder's reminiscences is striking: "The writings of Hamerton, Clarence Cook, and Eastlake were often discussed. The last-named led Abbey to an exhaustive search on furniture of the Georgian period, and to exploring the antique furniture shops."—Here we see the beginnings of that interest in furniture, developing into profound knowledge, and leading to many valuable acquisitions, which Abbey never lost, and which helped, no doubt, to determine his trend towards the reconstruction of historical scenes.

In addition to his work for Van Ingen and Snyder and his Academy tasks, Abbey made a number of drawings in a more popular vein and sent them to *Harper's Weekly*, in the hope of adding to his very slender resources. Many of these were no doubt returned; the first to be accepted was a full-page rendering of "The Puritans' First Thanksgiving," published on December 3rd, 1870, when the artist was eighteen. This was almost beyond question the drawing that the boy took to Schussele on his first visit to the Academy.

FIRST *HARPER* DRAWINGS

Another early—possibly earlier—drawing, "Tracking Rabbits," was held back until December 20th, 1873. An interesting point to note in "The Puritans" is the resemblance of the seated Indian on the left to the seated Indian, also on the left, in the Harrisburg rendering of Penn's Treaty, painted more than forty years after. The child is father to the man.



CHAPTER III

HOME LIFE IN NEW YORK AND THE HOUSE OF HARPER

1871 Aged 18–19

Out into the World—Charles Parsons—The Potter House and "Cousin Jo"—The Lure of Music—Laborious Nights—The Firm of Harper and Brothers—Journalists with the Pencil—Henry James on Abbey

ABBEY'S career as an artist began seriously when, in February, 1871, aged eighteen—nearly nineteen—he entered the illustrators' department of the publishing firm of Harper and Brothers in Franklin Square, New York. This step was made possible by the intermediary offices of William Truslow, a cousin, and the high opinion of the boy's gifts and potentialities formed by the firm's art editor, the late Charles Parsons, who, on receipt of a packet of specimen drawings, had written to Mr. Abbey in the most encouraging and confident terms with regard to his son's future, and who was destined to be for many years the young artist's friend and counsellor. Charles Parsons, who in 1871 was fifty years of age, had already occupied his position at Franklin Square for eight years, and he was to remain in it until 1889. Himself a landscape painter, he brought a trained eye to his work as a supervisor, and much of the prosperity of the Harper publications can be traced to his intelligence and zeal.

When the boy left Philadelphia for New York, Willard Snyder went too; and this chances to be a fortunate circumstance for the biographer. The two youths shared lodgings, living at 90 Morton Street, just off Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, a boarding house kept by a Mrs. Birdsaye—drawn to this abode by the reason that Abbey's cousins, the Sylvanus Beards and their two children, occupied the whole of the second floor. Above them lodged Bleeker N. Mitchell, an amateur artist, his nephew, Samuel Post, Abbey and Willard Snyder. Mr. Mitchell was a cultured and travelled man, whose room contained many relics of his wanderings and indica-

tions of his sound and catholic taste, and it was an advantage to the boys to be made free of it. There they would pore over photographs of Italy and pictures in the foreign galleries, talk, sing, and play. Abbey, who was clever with the banjo, had a repertory of plantation melodies; and he was famous also for a wonderful somersault with which he would bring a song to an end. "The rare physical strength," says Mr. Snyder, "needed for this somersault explains the mastery he had over things. It led him to trust wholly and to have faith in himself."

But 90 Morton Street was not Abbey's New York home; it was merely his lodging. His home was a short distance away, at the Potter House, where he spent all the time that he could, and always dined. Mr. and Mrs. Potter, their son, and their son-in-law and their daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Curtiss, lived in very perfect amity. Mrs. Potter had been a Miss Truslow, and thus was Mr. Abbey's cousin; her daughter, Mrs. Curtiss, was then—and remained to the end of her life—Edwin Abbey's favourite intimate among all his kin. Of "Cousin Jo," as he called her, he never ceased to speak with the deepest affection. "She was my safeguard for many years," are his words in one of his later letters. And again: "She brought out all that was best of me in my growing years." Mr. Snyder was also under the spell of Mrs. Curtiss, who must have been a strikingly beautiful woman. He speaks of her conversational ease and charm, her inherent loveliness of spirit and fine aristocracy of demeanour.

Mrs. Curtiss, he tells us, presided at dinner, with her young relative on her right. Afterwards there was either music or cards or both. Abbey carried throughout his life a detestation of cards, which to him were an anti-social infliction. He therefore did not play, but played instead, in those early days, a diabolical game of his own invention, which consisted in recording minutely every exclamation that the card-players uttered. These, amid indignation and denial, he would read aloud when the rubber was done.

The Potter House was a musical centre, in a more serious way than Mr. Mitchell's room, for the whole family were members of

the Mendelssohn Glee Club, and Abbey, though he did not sing in it, never missed a concert. Mr. Snyder recalls an instance of the fascination of music—not quite of the Mendelssohn Glee Club order, but music with more glamour—for the young artist. "It led him," he says, "once to follow a band playing in 5th Avenue. The Seventh Regiment was marching up, and at the head was the band of nearly one hundred pieces. I think Arbuckle was the leader; he made use of a mass of woodwinds, and played marches of the bounding, tripping kind, with frills and rocket phrases. . . . As the band passed, Abbey gripped me by the arm and I found myself a part of the usual mob on the sidewalk following it. I hardly realised at first his intentions, but after being pushed and hustled from shoulder to shoulder for a block or two, I made an effort to get him away; his only response was a firmer grip on my arm; he seemed fascinated by the stirring music. It is the only instance that I remember where external influences had an effect on him. When the music stopped we turned aside, and I said, 'Will you please tell me what ails you, that you must walk with a mob in 5th Avenue?' He said, 'Oh! let yourself out, and don't talk like a book.' Then, with a laugh he added, 'But wasn't it fine!'"

Referring to another of his early Brooklyn lodgings with some Truslow cousins, Abbey wrote, in a letter to his future wife, "I was an intensely shy boy then and used to go to my room after dinner and work and read. Most nights I used to paint in water-colours, by candle light, or draw my own beautiful figure in the glass—catching awful colds sometimes, for there was no fire up there. . . . Sometimes I used to work nearly all night."

In 1871 the firm of Harper and Brothers consisted of John Harper, Fletcher Harper, John W. Harper and Joseph H. Harper, the sons of John, Fletcher Harper, junior, Joseph W. Harper, junior, the son of Wesley, who had died in 1870, and Philip J. H. Harper, the son of James, who had died in 1869. The acorn from which the oak grew was the partnership of John and James Harper, the sons of Joseph Harper, a printer in Dover Street, New York, in 1817. It was in June, 1850, that the first number of *Harper's Magazine*

appeared. The nominal editor was Henry J. Raymond, but its real conductor was Fletcher Harper, who was then a man of forty-four. Within six months its circulation was over 50,000; in 1853 it had risen to 130,000, and the magazine had become a power. The late George William Curtis took charge of "The Easy Chair" in 1853; the late Charles Parsons was placed at the head of the firm's Art Department in 1863; and in the same year Mr. Henry Mills Alden, who until very recently was still editor-in-chief, began his long association with the magazine.

Harper's Weekly was founded in 1857, also by Fletcher Harper, and when, in 1871, Abbey entered the Art Department, it was at the head of American illustrated journalism. To-day it has ceased to be except as a title incorporated in *The Independent*. Such are the vicissitudes of periodicals!

Photography being then in its infancy and process-blocks having not yet come into existence—the two inventions which make possible the momently topical pictures in the morning and evening papers to-day—it follows that *Harper's Weekly* had to depend upon draughtsmanship. The draughtsmen drew chiefly on the wood, which afterwards passed to the engravers. To-day, to the regret of many artists, wood engravers are difficult to find; in the 1870's they abounded. One has only to compare any volume of *Punch*, say, of that period with any volume of the same paper of the present time, to realise that scientific inventiveness and artistic gain are not synonymous terms.

What Abbey and his colleagues had to do for *Harper's Weekly* was, practically, to be journalists with the pencil. Subjects poured in, just as they pour in to the desk of the ready-writer, and the artists had to rise to the occasion in the same way. Artists are, as a rule, dreamy folk who hate equally to be hurried and to obey instructions too closely. But the artist who is also a journalist must either be in time with his drawing or lose his job. And especially so in New York. It was this training on *Harper's Weekly* which no doubt gave Abbey much of his quickness, his instant mental and manual reaction and his sense of business obligation. Few artists can have had

as well-ordered and tractable a brain as his; none ever had a readier hand.

The late Henry James—who, as we shall see, was to become one of Abbey's closest friends—criticising, in 1886, Abbey's work in an article of great discernment, develops this point. "For us," he wrote, "no artistic genius that our country has produced is more delightful than Mr. Abbey's; so, surely, nothing could be more characteristically American than that it should have formed itself in the conditions that happened to be nearest at hand, with the crowds, streets and squares, the railway stations and telegraph poles, the wondrous sign-boards and triumphant bunting of New York for the source of its inspiration, and with a big hurrying printing-house for its studio. If to begin the practice of art in these conditions was to incur the danger of being crude, Mr. Abbey braved it with remarkable success. At all events, if he went neither through the mill of Paris nor through that of Munich the writer of these lines more than consoles himself for the accident. His talent is unsurpassably fine, and yet we may reflect with complacency that he picked it up altogether at home. If he is highly distinguished, he is irremediably native, and (premising always that I speak mainly of his work in black-and-white) it is difficult to see, as we look, for instance, at the admirable series of his drawings for *She Stoops to Conquer*, what more Paris or Munich could have done for him. There is a certain refreshment in meeting an American artist of the first order who is not a pupil of Gérome or Cabanel."

CHAPTER IV

IN HARPERS' ART DEPARTMENT

1871 Aged 18–19

An Autobiographical Letter—The Art Staff at Franklin Square—C. S. Reinhart —Winslow Homer—Gilbert Gaul's Recollections—Will H. Low's Recollections —Abbey's First Magazine Drawings—A Scrap-book—The Great English Illustrators—Millais' Tribute

ABBEY'S early career in New York falls into three divisions: the period from 1871–1874, when he was working in the "Office"; the period 1874–1875, when he set up a studio of his own and became a free-lance; and the period from 1875 to the close of 1878, when, although still working in a studio, he re-allied himself to Harpers'.

Of the first period we have some of Abbey's own memories in a letter to Mr. M. H. Spielmann, called forth by some (as it happened, lucky) inaccuracies in the proofs of a series of articles on himself and his work in the *Magazine of Art* in 1898–1899. And here the reader's attention is drawn to the vigour, clarity, and spirit of Abbey's epistolary style, qualities which will be noticed again and again as extracts from the correspondence occur to add vivacity to these pages. "To begin with," he wrote, "the 'Office' at Franklin Square, as we used to call it, was the dumping ground of the entire illustrated and foreign press. This mass of material—even in 1871—was prodigious; what it must be now—if the same custom is kept up—'passes' me; but one saw every week and every month *all* that was being done —good, bad, and indifferent—and I was drawn to the English draughtsmen in black-and-white of the time irresistibly. Reinhart —the only other figure man then in the office—had studied in Paris and Munich (he was ten years my senior) and had been introduced by Arthur Murch to Poynter, Arthur Severn, and several English painters, and had many legends of du Maurier and other men of Murch's circle—Leighton, too—which I listened to with eager interest; and in the pages of the English exchanges read with equal interest descriptions and criticisms of the current exhibitions, so

that when the Centennial Exhibition came off—in '76—I knew nearly all the pictures of the English exhibit—the modern ones, that is—quite intimately.

"Alexander was not one of the staff then. I took the hard wooden chair that had just been vacated by C. G. Bush, the caricaturist, who had been its occupant for some years. Reinhart was there, Theodore R. Davis (a war special), Stanley Fox and, a little later, Granville Perkins—a clever marine painter in a conventional way, who had been scene painter at the Havana Opera. The office boy—just going away—was a remarkable fellow, and was a really fine painter. He didn't find his niche there—or anywhere else—for some time. His name was Alfred Kappes. Kappes had compiled an enormous and remarkable scrap-book in which were pasted nearly all the Walker illustrations—and hundreds of others—from the *Cornhill*, *Once a Week*, *Punch*, *Fun*, *Good Words*, *Sunday Magazine*, etc., and over this I used to pore by the hour.

"Every one of the men I have named is dead. Extra times we used to have in two brothers named Waud—Englishmen—A. R. Waud and William Waud. By extra times I mean the Chicago and Boston fire times, the July riots, etc., when we used to keep it up all day and all night, too. I have done thirty-six hours on end, but I've suffered for it afterwards (cold coffee and a wet towel, you know). Both the Wauds are dead. William was in great request by architects. He used to make perspective drawings in water-colour; remarkably good they were, too.

"I remember very early in my career, when I was still backward about availing myself of my opportunities, the destruction of a mass of original sketches sent in by the specials during the rebellion. There were literally thousands of these. A few were saved (by Kappes), but the rest went to the paper mill. I remember a lot by Winslow Homer, the most original and the most American painter we have ever had. We were changing our room, and the opportunity was seized of clearing out the litter. I wish I had some of it—now."

Certain of the names just mentioned need a few words. Charles Stanley Reinhart, who was born in 1844 and died in 1896, had been

a landscape and *genre* painter, but for many years worked as an illustrator for Harpers'. Some of his black-and-white was very brilliant, in particular his studies of types. He resided in Paris from 1881 to 1891. Reinhart never quite fulfilled the promise of his younger days. –Arthur Murch was an English landscape painter, very well known in London artistic circles, and a special friend of Fred Jameson, the architect, who was to be so hospitable to Abbey in 1879. Murch's widow, also an artist, married the late Matthew Ridley Corbet, the landscape painter.—John W. Alexander (b. October, 1856, d. May, 1915) is the American portrait painter whose fame is now world-wide.—Theodore R. Davis "did" the Civil War for the *Weekly*.—Granville Perkins (b. 1830), who is still living, is chiefly known for his marine subjects—both drawings and paintings.—Alfred Kappes (b. 1850) became a *genre* painter of some popularity.—Winslow Homer was sixteen years older than Abbey; he died in 1910.

The earliest personal recollection of Abbey at work (shall one say?) in the Art Department bears rather upon his sense of fun. It is supplied by Mr. Gilbert Gaul, the battle painter, who says that in 1872, when he was seventeen and a student at J. G. Brown's, he was sent with a message to Charles Parsons. "It was," he writes, "a dreary place, up a winding iron stair and through ill-lighted lofts to a lead-coloured board partition, on the door in the centre of which was a sign 'Art Department.' There was considerable commotion on the other side of the door, I thought, but I proceeded to enter. I had no sooner shown my head than a heavy hair cushion belonging to one of the office chairs struck my head with a bang and fell to the floor. Instinctively I drew back, using the door as a shield, and when I again looked round it into the room everyone was at a desk and working so rapidly and seriously that one would imagine there was no other object in life. 'The cat was away and the mice were at play.' One of their number had left the room and my footsteps in the empty loft had led them to suppose that he was returning. The cushion was only part of the reception that had been planned for him.

"The man at the nearest desk to me finally slowly left his absorbing task and very gravely asked me my business. When I found that

the head was absent I suppose I smiled my appreciation of the state of affairs, for the young man smiled also and invited me to wait. This was Abbey, but I found afterwards that it was he who had thrown the cushion."

All Abbey's old friends, it may be said, agree in noting the rare union of fun and purposefulness which distinguished him not only as a boy and a young man, but which he preserved to the end.

It was in his first days at Harpers' that Abbey again met Mr. Will H. Low, between whose career and his own are certain affinities: they were of much the same age, both had an idyllic vein, both found subjects of the past more congenial than the present, and both gave much time and thought to mural decoration. Mr. Low, however, had this great advantage over his friend, that the golden years between eighteen and twenty-five were spent by him in study in Paris, Abbey's unattained Mecca. "I remember how I envied you," he wrote to Mr. Low, "when you came in and told me that you were going abroad. There was I, stuck, doing three years' time." And in a later letter: "It seems extraordinary that we ever survived the artistically barren existence that once was ours in the early 'seventies. Our highest artistic treat was to buy a tube of Chinese white at Knoedler's and as a reward to be asked up into the gallery, where, after one, one saw Gérome's 'Cæsar and Cleopatra,' 'Sword Dance', or 'Chariot Race,' and Boughton's 'Young Heir,' and many more interesting and unattainable works of art."

The chief activities of the art staff under Mr. Parsons were, of course, concerned with the *Weekly*. The *Magazine* being a more leisurely publication, its illustrations were not produced under the same high pressure. Through the pages of the *Weekly*, where re-drawing and adaptation formed a large part of the draughtsmen's task, it is not perhaps necessary to follow Abbey's pencil too closely. But the *Magazine* and he were destined to be so linked together for so many years that there we shall trace his hand to the end: that is to say, from 1871 to 1909, when his last illustration appeared. "The first drawing," Abbey says, in the autobiographical letter to Mr. Spielmann, "I made was one for the magazine. It was

supposed to depict Victor Emmanuel at the deathbed of Count Cavour. I hope it may never be dug out of its resting place. I stood for V.E. myself on a chair before a shaving-glass."

Although this Cavour article, which appeared in the magazine for August, 1871, was the first on which Abbey was set to work by Mr. Parsons, one of his later drawings saw the light before it. In July, 1871, had been printed a patriotic ballad by R. H. Stoddard, entitled "When this Old Flag was New," several of the illustrations for which were, it is probable, assembled from stock rather than made for the poem; but among those which we know to have come from the staff, for the purpose, were two signed "C.S.R." (by Reinhart), and one signed "Abbey." Abbey's depicts a review of volunteers and has much spirit and drollery.

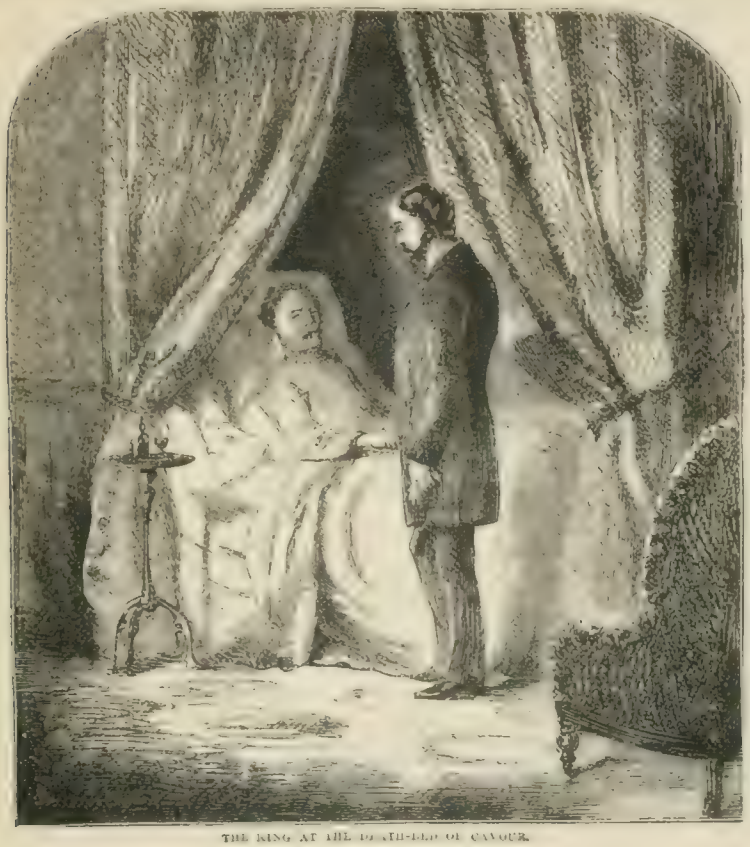
Truth to tell, the level of illustrations in *Harper's Magazine* at that time was not high; that of the literary contributions being infinitely better. This is rather odd, considering how superb was English illustration at that time, and how quick the Americans were to import and appreciate English books. For a surprisingly long time it seems to have been held that pictures did not really matter. But that Abbey himself entertained other views as to the desirability of the best drawing we know not only on the evidence of Mr. Snyder, which has been cited, but upon that of a scrap-book of his own, a more select compilation than Kappes's, to which he alludes above, dating from those days. In this he pasted a number of those black-and-white drawings in *Good Words*, *Once a Week*, *Cornhill*, *Punch*, and so forth, which most took his admiration and his imagination. It lies before me as I write, and it is impossible to turn the pages without a thrill as one masterpiece after another is revealed; masterpieces not only of draughtsmanship, strong, nervous, and essential, but of wood engraving too. The artists represented are G. J. Pinwell, William Small, Fred Walker, Millais, and Charles Keene, and though Abbey was the direct derivative of no one, but a sensitive student of the best of all his forerunners, one can feel here and there how deep an impression this drawing and that must have made upon him. It chanced that on the same day

E. A. ABBEY'S FIRST AND SECOND DRAWINGS FOR *HARPER'S MAGAZINE*

In compliance with the Artist's wish, as expressed in his letter on the opposite page, this drawing was not to be dug out of its resting-place ; but towards the end of 1919 the following inscriptions, set down in his own hand (no doubt in the early part of the last year of his life) were discovered in his copy of *Harper's Magazine* written very distinctly in pencil on the margins of the reproductions of the first and second drawings which he made for the Magazine. This seemed to remove the objection to reproducing them here.

1. "THIS IS THE FIRST DRAWING I MADE AT HARPERS [SIGNED] EDWIN A. ABBEY."

2. "THIS IS THE SECOND DRAWING I MADE AT HARPERS—I THINK IN JANUARY, 1871—
[SIGNED] E. A. ABBEY."



THE KING AT THE DEATH-BED OF CAVOUR.

"AND GENERAL MUSTER-DAY."

on which Mrs. Abbey showed me this scrap-book came a letter from Mr. Will H. Low reverting to his intimacy with Abbey at the time that the book was in the making, and recording a discussion of which the genius of Keene and du Maurier was the subject: "I being champion of the merits of du Maurier, based upon a love which I have never outgrown for his 'divinely fair' and more than 'divinely tall' maidens, and Ned somewhat scorning these and filled with admiration for Keene's wonderful grasp of character." Abbey's thoughts must have returned to this scrap-book when, in 1889, after gaining the First-Class Medal for his black-and-white drawings at the great Paris Exhibition, he read in a French criticism of his work, "Il continue ainsi dignement les traditions des fameux dessinateurs d'outre Manche: des Fred Walker, des Pinwell, des Millais, et des Keene."

In turning these pages and lingering upon the drawings that are signed with the initial "M" I like to remember that less than twenty years after (as is recorded again later in this book), Millais gave it as his opinion that a certain American artist named Abbey, who had settled in Europe, should be elected to the Royal Academy on the strength of his black-and-white work alone.

CHAPTER V

IN HARPERS' ART DEPARTMENT

1872–74 Aged 19–22

Charles Mente's Recollections—Charles Parsons as a Martinet—Abbey's Purposefulness—An Illustrator's Versatility—J. E. Kelly's Recollections—A Glimpse of the Promised Land—Herrick and Shakespeare

THE recollections of Abbey and Harpers' Art Department, which Mr. Charles Mente, the artist and an old colleague, has written for this work date from 1872. Writing to Mr. Spielmann, Abbey says that "he utilised Charles Mente—as good-natured a chap as ever breathed, and a very good painter at this writing [1899], for all sorts of things. Our way—as a rule—was to hand the block to the next chap, and tell him to 'just run me in, like this'—striking the pose oneself. It was all on that dreary wood, and nine times out of ten bits of the block would be in the engraving room."

"Abbey," writes Mr. Mente, "was always a hard worker and student, often working at home at night as well as on holidays. He was fine looking, manly, with broad shoulders, well built, and beautiful teeth. Fletcher Harper, junior, remarked one day, 'I like to see Mr. Abbey laugh, so I can see a fine set of teeth.' Models were rarely used. The artists posed for each other here and there. I often posed for Abbey, but Mr. Parsons never took kindly to that, as taking up time which I should devote to the house of Harper. He was a kind old gentleman, whom we all liked, but very conscientious when it came to the interests of Harper and Brothers. One of the artists caught a dying mouse one day in the office, put it on his desk and started in making very careful sketches, when Mr. Parsons showed up and remonstrated with him in a kindly way about taking up time which belonged to the firm. The artist tried to explain how usefully these sketches might come in, but Mr. Parsons could not see it that way, so the poor mouse was drowned after serving as a model. I mention this to show the discipline in

the office. Abbey showed his strong individuality from the start, as can be seen by his early drawings on wood which appeared in *Harper's Weekly* and the *Magazine*. You can spot them at once. His salary in 1872 was twenty dollars per week, pay-day every two weeks; but as we could draw on account if necessary, his envelope was often rather slim on pay-day, as he would rarely hesitate to pick up a costume or have it made, or buy a book or art publication. His lunch would then often consist of half a pound of crackers for several days, and he would stay in for the noon hour. He would sometimes get hold of Jones to pose for him at noon—this was the letter-carrier who brought the mail around to us—and in return Jones would sometimes get a sketch. 'No model to pay and lots of fun,' as Abbey said, instead of tinkering over a block of boxwood."

Further light on the methods of these young men is found in an unfinished letter written by Abbey to Charles Dudley Warner in 1894: "When I began to draw for Harpers', an illustrator, although he might have a preference, was usually prepared to undertake any mortal thing, from the Bible to a catalogue of new designs in stoves. He usually had an office in John Street, or Beekman Street, or in some quarter affected by wood engravers, upon whom he was dependent for commissions, as a rule. Here he had a small library of illustrated books—*Shakespeare*, with John Gilbert's illustrations, Cassell's or Wood's *Natural History*, as many as he could afford of the gift books illustrated by Birket Foster, and J. D. Harding's *Lessons on Trees*. If he were pretty successful he had a boy to run errands, whiten blocks, and so on. When a job came in accompanied by a small parcel of blocks, the draughtsman, after having mastered his subject, would turn to his library, turn it over until he had found figures and trees suited to his purpose, and copy them neatly upon the blocks before him. If he was a very superior person he didn't do the trees himself, but farmed them out to an assistant. . . ."

It is in the *Magazine* for March, 1872, in an article upon the United States Treasury Department, that we find the first drawing

of Abbey, signed "E.A.A." and giving promise of his more serious trend: "Washington in Consultation with Morris and Hamilton at his House in New York." Other of Abbey's drawings in 1872 illustrate negro life in America, life in Japan, life at German spas, life in California, life in Syria, discoveries in Cyprus, and so forth, all, of course, redrawn from photographs or other people's sketches. But in September he had a chance to be himself and record some of his own observations, in the illustrations to a description of a trip on the Great Lakes, in which he caught very happily several types seen *en voyage*.

Of Abbey in 1873 we have a glimpse in the reminiscences written for this book by the sculptor James Edwin Kelly, who was by three years Abbey's junior. Mr. Kelly's recollections are concerned chiefly with a slightly later period, but his first sight of his friend and hero being in 1873, I quote the description here. "The first time," he says, "that I saw Abbey was when he came bounding into Harpers' Art Department, after a vacation in 1873. His soft, light brown hair, his strong, beautifully modelled brow, gleaming brown eyes, straight nose with sensitive nostrils, mobile, flexible, merry mouth, and his smile showing his bright white teeth, won me at once. On studying him he grew upon me. His complexion was pure, the colour of ivory, as were his shapely high-bred hands. He was short, slight, and well set up. He seemed bright, brilliant, and joyous, and that impression has never been effaced. We soon got acquainted, and I found his soft voice added to his charm. I can understand that in his future career it must have won him many hearts."

In 1873 Abbey, although London was still unknown to him, did not hesitate to illustrate for the *Magazine* a series of anonymous descriptions of life in that city. His sketches have spirit, but naturally they lack authenticity. One of the articles treats of the artists' quarters, and we imagine with what feeling the young restless draughtsman, whose thoughts were so often with the English masters, read the text. Such a passage as this, for example, on the district about Newman Street, where he was afterwards to

have a lodging of his own, must have been more than exciting: "In this network of streets is your true Bohemia. In the dingy first floors of these houses what dreams have been dreamed by young Salvator Rosas coming to town for the first time! The British student looks to this metropolis as the Italian to Rome—

> And at night along the dusty highway near and nearer drawn,
> Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn,
> And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
> Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men.

—What pictures he will paint! What Academy honours he will win! What lasting fame he will achieve! How sternly he will set about correcting the public taste so notoriously degraded!"

In the *Magazine* for 1874 and 1875 we find many significant things, all done earlier. Late in 1874, Abbey, as we are about to see, left the firm to become an independent draughtsman. A survey of the illustrations in 1874 throws light on the diversity of Abbey's tasks. We find, signed by him, views of Martinique, a portrait of William Barnes, the Dorsetshire poet, and various Dorsetshire relics, a view of Cape Horn, scenes in Bermuda, scenes in the Faralla Islands, sketches of women flower-sellers, a snowy landscape to illustrate a poem by Mary Mapes Dodge, a comic Irishman to illustrate a poem by R. H. Stoddard, sketches for an article on the boundary line between America and Canada, types of railroad men in America, and a view of a giant tree at Nassau. Photographs again, no doubt, formed the basis of most of this work. This year, 1874, saw Abbey's first publicly exhibited water-colour, "Rustics Dancing in a Barn," which was hung in the American Water Colour Society's Exhibition.

But the most interesting of Abbey's contributions to *Harper's* in 1874 have yet to be named: his first effort both with Shakespeare and with Herrick—two authors with whose names he was to be so closely associated. But whereas his first Herrick drawings were serious, his first dealings with the dramatist were frivolous. The famous illustrator of Shakespeare's "Comedies" and "Trage-

dies," whose drawings were to shed such distinction on *Harper's Magazine* for many years, began his Shakespearean career in its pages with a travesty. The May number of *Harper's*, 1874, is notable for containing the first of the Herrick drawings—illustrating "Corinna's Going a-Maying." Mr. Kelly tells us that the suggestion—a very fruitful one—came from Mr. Alden. Since it is Abbey's work on Herrick that led to his visit to England in 1878, and determined the main course of his career, this early example of his most characteristic work in pen and ink is very noteworthy; and not the less so because the same poem served him as the subject of his first oil painting, in 1890, "May Day Morning." When, however, the edition of Herrick was published in 1882, these Corinna drawings were replaced by others. Abbey's most interesting contribution to *Harper's* in 1875—done probably in 1873 or 1874—was a series of illustrations to the famous story of "The Three Bears," as extracted from Southey's *Doctor*. They are a proof that, had he so wished, he could have been one of the most acceptable illustrators for children. We find him more in his later style in the drawings of "Major Pitcairn Stirring his Brandy" in an article on "The Concord Fight" later in the year.

CHAPTER VI

A FREE-LANCE IN NEW YORK

1874–1875 Aged 22–23

Departure from the Art Department—Mr. Kelly's Recollections—The 35 Union Square Studio—Historical Drawings—A. W. Drake—W. H. Carroll's Recollections—A Merry Studio—Dickens' *Christmas Stories*—The Blackburn Exhibition of English Draughtsmen—The Old University Building—"The Stage Office"—Winslow Homer—Mr. Kelly's Tribute

ABBEY was paid 15 dollars a week during his first year at Harper's, 1871-1872; 20 dollars a week for the second year, 1872-1873; and 35 dollars a week, or, in English money, at the rate of £350 per annum, during his third year, 1873–1874. It was at the close of this third year that he came to the decision that he could earn more money, and certainly do his powers more justice, if he exchanged the routine of the Art Department for the independence of a private studio, and put his talents on an open market. This would be a bold step for so young a man, but he took it. With all his modesty, Abbey never lacked courage, and he had long been curiously mature in judgment; moreover, there was a spice of adventure to the plan. Having made up his mind, he acted quickly, according to his custom through life, and took a studio at No. 35 Union Square, on the top floor front, young Kelly joining with him. Here he was prepared to make drawings not only for the Harpers, whose good will he preserved, but for *Scribner's Monthly Magazine* too, and for anyone else. Although this seemed to him the wisest course, it was not pursued without difficulties. Writing some years after, he says, "That time I left Harpers and had to go to other publishers for work, I nearly died of sheer shyness."

The circumstance that Mr. Kelly joined in the enterprise is fortunate, for his recollections illumine those days. "Abbey," he writes, "came to me and said that he was going to leave because Harpers would not give him 40 dollars a week. He said he was going to set up a studio, and asked me to go with him. I jumped at the opportunity, and was for leaving at once without consult-

ing anybody, but he said I must get a release. I asked Mr. Parsons to let me go. He said, 'If you want to go with Abbey you will not be happy here,' so he wrote out a release. In the fall of 1874 Abbey hired a small room at 35 Union Square. The building was originally the home of the Townsend family, and it bore in its construction evidence of past dignity: a high brown stone stoop, pillared entrance, broad halls, etc. It had been turned into business offices, and the top floor cut up into studios with skylights. The front was divided in the centre, the south one being Abbey's. It was about 12 ft. wide and 18 ft. long. Two small round windows like portholes gave a view of 17th Street and Union Square. The furniture consisted of one fine chair, a fine old desk, a model-stand, a screen, and a grate with a marble mantel on which were an anatomical bust and a plaster cast of a queer old horse. A partition ran along the end of the room, concealing a coal-bin, and a lot of old costumes.

"Abbey never demanded anything of me, but my affection for him made me not hesitate to do anything for him; so I arranged that, as he had a reputation to keep up, and I had none to lose, I would carry out the ashes to the street, get water from the basement, and go to the publishers as though I were employed by him; while he was to sweep up, kindle the fires, and so forth.

"He must have been under a hard strain at that time, as he had not much work, and what little money he had seemed to disappear. Reinhart and I used to tell him about his extravagance. He would smile, but never answer us. I found out later that all he could spare he sent to his family and stinted himself.

"The first drawings I recall his getting were from Marvin, Art editor of Scribner, Armstrong Co. It was a drawing of Icabod Crane for a school book which they were publishing. My lanky figure, long nose, and sunburned face seemed to suit the part. They were also about publishing Bryant and Gay's *History of the United States*. Abbey was commissioned by them to make a couple of large pictures: one was 'Columbus before the Council at Salamanca' and the other was 'Endicott Cutting the Cross from the

King's Banner.' I posed for all the pictures, and Smithwick engraved the 'Endicott.' This *History*, which ran through four volumes, has probably the most valuable collection of artists and engravers that has ever been gotten together in this country; and it is specially valuable for the index, which gives the artist and engraver credit, which was not the custom at the time."

The *History* reappeared in 1896–1898 in a new edition, in five volumes, under the title, *Scribner's Popular History of the United States*, begun by William Cullen Bryant and continued and revised by Sydney Howard Gay and Noah Brooks. "The complete work," says the introduction, "contains over 1,600 illustrations, which represent practically every illustrator who has been favourably known for the past twenty years"—that is, since 1876. Not only is Abbey among them but here also are many of his early New York associates at Harpers', such as Winslow Homer, C. S. Reinhart, J. E. Kelly, A. R. Waud and W. Waud, Charles Mente, Alfred Kappes, A. B. Frost. Here, too, are some early topographical scenes by Charles Parsons, while his successor in the Art Department after his retirement, F. B. Schell, is also among the artists.

Abbey's next patron, says Mr. Kelly, was Alexander Wilson Drake (1843–1916), of *Scribner's Monthly* and *St. Nicholas*, and later of *The Century*, who would drift into the studio, pace about the room and pick up a sketch "as though he were inspecting old clothes. He began by being very cautious, and gave Abbey occasionally a photograph to copy on wood. After a while he gave him his first manuscript, called 'A Middy in Manila.' It was written by J. D. J. Kelly, Lieutenant U.S.N. Then came a book on fishing to illustrate, portraying a party of gentlemen, one of whom was Chester A. Arthur, afterwards President.

"One day Abbey came in all aglow and bustle with the news that his mother, sister, and cousin, Mrs. Curtiss, were to call and see the new studio. Then we started in and made the dust fly, and got the room in ship-shape, so trim that we could not think of mussing it up again by working. So we dawdled around, till at last they arrived: his mother, short, dark, bright-eyed, and suggesting Abbey; his sis-

ter, as I remember, was lighter and suggested him slightly. Mrs. Curtiss was dark-haired, bright-eyed, cheerful and merry.

"In the drawing of 'Mrs. Murray Entertaining the British Officers,' for the *History*, Mrs. Curtiss posed for Mrs. Murray; although it is only a back view it suggests her charm. I posed for the officers. For this beautiful drawing, which first appeared in *Scribner's Monthly*, Drake gave 25 dols., and retained the original. These drawings, published in the January and February numbers of the magazine in 1876, struck the pace for the other artists, who made a specialty of illustrating the Revolutionary period." Another *Scribner* drawing for July 1876—made in 1874 or early 1875—which, curiously enough, was not reproduced in the *History*, and which foreshadows the later work of the artist—almost indeed the latest work—is the drawing of "John Nixon Reading the Declaration of Independence in the State House Yard, July 8th, 1776"—for this was to be the actual subject of one of his Harrisburg decorations thirty-five years after; and a comparison of the two treatments, so widely separated in time, is interesting. The drawings to Edward Everett Hale's story, "Philip Nolan's Friends," were Abbey's last work for *Scribner's Monthly*. They have much spirit and show an exceptional sense of selection; and the author was delighted with them.

"Abbey," Mr. Kelly continues, "tried in every way to get the publishers to give me work, but they would not trust me as I looked too young. But he always encouraged me to keep on. His criticism and personality enthused me. He finally induced Drake to give me some illustrations for *St. Nicholas*, which were published a year or so afterwards. I find the following memorandum in an old notebook: 'July 9th, 1875—Drake gave me his first order through Abbey. What a brick he is! Love him as a brother.'"

Other glimpses of Abbey on his top floor at 35 Union Square are given by Mr. W. H. Carroll, the artist. "I shall always," he writes, "remember his kindly greeting. He was engaged in illustrating a magazine article on General Washington, and that morning he was disappointed by his model. I volunteered my services. The result was that I, in the full uniform of General Knox, wept on Kelly's

shoulder, Kelly taking the part of the father of our country. While Abbey was sketching he not only explained methods but spoke about the importance of correct costume and detail, and also kept up a fire of repartee with Kelly, who had hard work to keep up the dignity of his part.

"This led to many visits, in which Abbey always invited me to sketch from his model, giving me his criticisms and often his original pencil sketches after drawing them on wood. In Kelly's absence he often spoke about the great trouble and untiring energy Kelly spent to get the correct dress for his warlike studies, as he called them, and would always refer me to Kelly for information on that subject. 'And as for myself,' he said with a smile, 'I never spare any expense.' ...

"The studio at 35, as I remember it, was of office-like simplicity, littered with pamphlets, old reference books, magazines, a large easel and a model-stand between two porthole windows, guns, swords, and old army uniforms, and a few sketches on the wall—one of Wolfe by Abbey. It was a workshop. It was very interesting to hear Abbey reading aloud a manuscript—himself and Kelly acting out positions to illustrate the article—and then both sketching different details from the same model, Kelly sitting between Abbey's legs to get the same point of view.

"Often Abbey would entertain us by quoting *Pepys' Diary*. When the unexpected cheque arrived for him it was always celebrated by a dinner at the Everett or the Clarendon. His many visitors never interfered with his work; he had the faculty of entertaining and producing at the same time."

"Orders," says Mr. Kelly, "now began to come in. Mr. Parsons sent him a commission to illustrate Dickens' *Christmas Stories* for Harpers' Household Edition. We had great fun over it. He would read the story, and I would act out the character; and when I got a position to suit him, he would call time and make the sketch. I seldom saw him make a composition. He would say to me, 'Stand this way,' and I would do it. Then he would sketch the figure on paper or directly on wood. He would then sketch the companion figures,

and work in the backgrounds until the composition was finished. I never could understand how he held them together. Of course, when he made a subject for the editor to decide on, he made the designs in the conventional manner. I believe I posed for all the figures. For 'Old Scrooge' with 'Marley's Ghost,' he took me over to the house of Mrs. Curtiss. He arranged the lights in the parlour by darkening the upper part of the window, giving the effect of firelight."

The *Christmas Stories* made one volume of *Harpers' Household Dickens*, described by the publishers as "elegant and cheap, with characteristic original illustrations." *Nicholas Nickleby* was given to Reinhart, *Pickwick* to Nast, and others were done by Fred Barnard, the English draughtsman, whom Abbey was to know in London, and J. Mahony. Abbey's volume, "entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1875," when he was twenty-three, shows signs of English influence, Walker, Pinwell, Small and Keene predominating. One regrets that the scheme of the series demanded so few illustrations.

An event of 1875 which cannot be overlooked is mentioned by Abbey in the autobiographical letter to Mr. Spielmann. "It was in 1875," he writes, "that Henry Blackburn brought over an exhibition of English water-colours—and a very dull lot they were—but with them he had a lot of black-and-white drawings. The originals of illustrations to Charles Reade's *Wandering Heir*, by Fildes, Woods, and Mrs. Allingham, and many very beautiful du Mauriers —of his best time—before he had stopped using Indian ink. These drawings were simply exquisite, and were a revelation to me. In that same exhibition was a water-colour by Pinwell—'The Great Lady'; this appealed to me more than anything I had ever seen in colour up to that time."

On leaving the Union Square studio, Abbey and Kelly moved to the studio on the third floor of the old University Building in Washington Square, since demolished. "It extended," writes Mr. Kelly, "from the Square to Waverly Place, and was built of grey granite, with towers and castellated roof. In it Professor Morse

had developed the telegraph; and, in many cases, the wires on which he had experimented remained in position. There, too, Professor Draper had made his first experiments in photography, and had taken the first portrait in America. Old tin signs were nailed on the walls, indicating where in the past had lived men of national fame, in art and literature, such as Eastman Johnson, etc. I remember Winslow Homer's sign still remained, although he had removed to the Studio Building in 10th Street. And now Abbey was to add another page to the hallowed memories of the picturesque old landmark. It was here he found himself, and it was here fame found him."

Mr. Low tells us that the scene of Theodore Winthrop's story *Cecil Dreeme* was laid there. In an unfinished letter to Mr. Will H. Low, written more than thirty years later, Abbey recalls that one of the most interesting of his neighbours was Francis Lathrop, who occupied one of the University towers. "Lathrop," he says, "had lots to tell me about Rossetti and Holman Hunt and Madox Brown, etc., and had a water-colour copy of a Holman Hunt, and was altogether wonderful to me, especially when he read all at one go—and was much excited thereby—Browning's 'Inn Album,' which was published first as a Sunday supplement to the *New York Times*. I remember his being given the very first bit of Stockton's 'Rudder Grange' to illustrate too, and how much I wished I had had it to do. I never hear of Lathrop now. He isn't dead, is he?" —Francis L. Lathrop, who died in 1909, was three years older than Abbey, and became an Associate of the National Academy of Design. In 1870-73 he was in England studying under Madox Brown and Burne-Jones and working in stained glass in the school of Morris. He was an illustrator, painted portraits, and designed stained glass, but latterly confined himself to decorative work.

Mr. Kelly's reminiscences of the old University Studio are now resumed. "Abbey came down one morning, with a boy carrying a very small trunk, covered with cowhide. Some relative had given it to him. Opening it he brought out an old Leghorn coal-scuttle bonnet and a skimpy gown of the early thirties. They inspired

him. He set to work on his epoch-making picture, 'The Stage Office,' showing a young girl sitting pensively beside a high desk, with the little trunk at her feet. In profile beside her, a tall model-face coachman in a long buff coat and top boots stood at attention. The bleak office, with its notices, and little character touches on the walls, all intensified the charm of that sweet young face. On looking at her one felt, as he gazed into the big bonnet, as the poet expressed it, that 'he was looking at beauty down a Leghorn lane.' I posed for the coachman, and between times I worked on a large black-and-white drawing illustrating Walt Whitman's poem 'The Vigil,' the centre figure of which Abbey posed for.

"We worked on our pictures for some time; at last came the day for the Academy to send for them. I urged him to let the express go and put the extra time on our work; and we could deliver the pictures ourselves. He finally yielded, and we gained a couple of days, working till dark on the last day, when we started up Fourth Avenue to the Academy on 23rd Street carrying our pictures. His was the largest. His cousin Truslow and friend Post walked behind us.

"Delivering the pictures, we awaited results. Abbey went to the opening. Next day he came in, looking a little earnest, and said 'I have sold "The Stage Office" for 300 dols., and Sarony wants to buy your "Vigil" for 50 dols. You had better let him have it.' He told me that the man who bought 'The Stage Office' thought it was painted by an Englishman, but was glad it was painted by an American.

"We got the morning's papers, and began to read the criticisms. All sounded his praises. This seemed to rouse him. Notice after notice was read; each proclaimed him the success of the year. He began to laugh like a boy, the happy boy he was. He would read an article, or I would read one, he would then jump up, begin to sing, or dance a walk-around. Some of the papers compared him with Winslow Homer, to Homer's disadvantage. At this he looked serious, then annoyed. 'I don't like that. I don't like that,' he said, and began to pace the room impatiently. Then putting on his hat

he started round to Homer's. On his return he told me, 'Homer seemed cut up over the article, and said, "All these years they have been calling me a rising young artist, and now in one day they call me an old fossil."' Shortly after Homer called at the studio and went over Abbey's works with great interest.

"Of course things in the large studio were not always at a high tension. We had lots of fun. Abbey's cousin, Truslow, and his friends Post and Mitchell cheered things up. We used to fence a good deal and box. Post would sing and dance; Abbey, after hours of intense application, would sing plantation songs and dance walk-arounds, or, in a loftier mood, would sing old-time melodies; but his song of 'Maud' made the most enduring impression. As his reputation advanced and his finances improved he was able to gratify his tastes. He bought historic costumes and quaint bits of furniture. The bleakness of the room disappeared, and cheer and cosiness took its place.

"As a tribute to Abbey's historical accuracy Hartley one day brought in St. Gaudens, just returned from France, who wished to consult Abbey on a Revolutionary costume for a proposed design for a statue of Sergeant Jasper. . . .

"There were very few models at that time, and they were a nondescript lot. Duffy—or Duff, as Abbey called him—was an old fellow with a long beard, who lived till he was a hundred. Most of the women would do washing or posing, whichever was most needed. At last a lovely girl named Maggie Keenan began to pose for the artists. She was tall, stately, and beautiful. Everyone respected her. She posed for Abbey's picture 'The Rose in October.'"

We have read of Mr. Gilbert Gaul's first meeting with Abbey, when the cushion was thrown. His second meeting with him was in the University Building Studio. Writing to Mr. Kelly, he says, "Abbey was at work from the model, and continued work, as he always did, but this did not detract from the genuineness of his welcome; in fact, it made one immediately feel at home with him. Possibly," Mr. Gaul concludes, "it will give the best idea of Abbey as I knew him to say that I never knew him to say an unkind thing

of anyone, and I never knew an unkind thing said of him by anyone else. He took a serious, kindly interest in everyone, and the world seems to have returned it to him in kind. His intuition, his serious thought shown in his work, his industry, also shown by his work, his sound judgment in other things, and last, but not least, his lack of egotism, would have made him great in any other pursuit chance may have led him to choose. He was a great artist, and he was also a great man, which is another story." When in 1876 Abbey returned to Harpers' his studio was taken by Reinhart, Mitchell, and Willard Snyder. Mr. Kelly was asked to join them, but he now had thoughts of becoming a sculptor and wished to work out of doors.

Let the following words from a letter from Mr. Kelly to Mrs. Abbey in 1911 conclude this chapter: "He was the ideal of my boyhood, he had all the qualities that inspired my love and admiration, but, boy-like, I tried to hide the sentiment, fearing that it might not be understood; till, as years went on, it became a habit, and I hardly dared admit to myself how *much* I treasured his memory. Yes, everything associated with him I have preserved, his portrait at twenty-three, his sketch-books, a box of paints which he gave me and urged me to accept Winslow Homer's offer to teach me painting—even the little boxwood block he used as a hand-rest when he drew on wood. These material treasures are nothing to the memory of kindness and encouraging words which he gave me. These, added to his refining influence on my work, make me his artistic debtor as well. But his universal kindness was appreciated by all. He fairly seemed to burden himself with the woes of others."

CHAPTER VII

RETURN TO THE ART DEPARTMENT

1876 Aged 24

A Growing Reputation—W. A. Rogers—A. B. Frost—Abbey's Helpfulness—Abbey at Twenty-three—First Decorative Work—The Centennial Exhibition

IN 1876 Abbey's work for *Harper's Magazine*—all commissioned when he was still a free-lance—was very slight: some illustrations in the April and May numbers to an article on Old Philadelphia, by Rebecca Harding Davis, mother of the late war-correspondent and novelist; in the June number a spirited representation of Richard Henry Lee addressing the Virginia Convention in 1775, when the flames of war were about to burst forth—"Give me liberty or give me death!"; and in the July number two illustrations to a ballad, by Paul K. Hayne, of Macdonald's Raid, showing a vast increase in power and certitude. Some time during the year the Franklin Square authorities realised that it would be wise to try to claim the whole, or the chief part, of Abbey's services once more, and they, therefore, made him so good an offer—50 dollars a week, or some £500 odd a year—that he did not feel justified in refusing it, and once again, although in a more independent position, entered the Art Department.

We see him at work there in this, his second, period, in some reminiscences kindly written for this book by Mr. W. A. Rogers, the cartoonist, who was by two years Abbey's junior. "All about the domain of Charles Parsons," he writes, "were the marks of Abbey's buoyant spirits. In the coat room, on each hook or nail, he had painted the legends: 'Ab., his nayle,' 'Frosty, his nayle,' 'Perky, his nayle,' etc., and over his own desk, suspended from a girder, swung a trapeze where he sometimes sought relief from the monotonous grind of office work. It was characteristic of Abbey that he must be always either at work or at play. His enthusiasm for one or the other never seemed to flag." "Frosty" was Mr. A. B. Frost, the disting-

uished American illustrator, who, born in 1851, was by a year Abbey's senior. Writing in 1917 Mr. Frost says that on recently visiting the old quarters he found "Ab., his nayle" still there; but it has gone now. It is greatly to be regretted that Mr. Frost cannot find the letters which he received from Abbey, most of which belong to the early London days, and are illustrated. Only one has he been able to find, and that is of an earlier date, October 17th, 1877. It tells of Sothern's success as "The Crushed Tragedian" in a marvellous make-up as Count Johannes.

"I had induced Mr. Parsons," Mr. Rogers continues, "to accept a sketch for a Christmas front page for the *Weekly*, and it had been redrawn on wood in the office. On the occasion when I first met Abbey he said, almost immediately, with a friendly chuckle, 'Frosty and I redrew that Christmas sketch of yours. We didn't know exactly what it meant, but Frosty said he didn't believe you knew either, so we went ahead.' Then we both laughed, and I felt we were friends from that moment. From the foregoing it would be inferred, naturally, that my first impressions of Abbey were of a humorous nature, but such was far from being the case. In appearance he was different in many subtle ways from anyone I had ever met. His features, while strong, were cut like a cameo; by force of contrast his dark, deep-set eyes gave his face an effect of great pallor. And, while he treated me with the utmost cordiality and used every effort to put me completely at my ease and on a basis of comradeship, I can feel to this day the thrill of an experience away beyond the material. As I grew to know him better in after days, this feeling grew deeper rather than less. It was all well enough, it seemed to me, for his companions to call him 'Ned,' to laugh at his merry pranks and funny sayings, but always, to me, his visible presence and what he said and did seemed to be the least of what he was."

Mr. Rogers, who was then the latest recruit to the staff, quickly discovered "how generously and with what patient kindness Abbey would put himself out to help a youngster struggling to learn. It will be necessary to explain here," he adds, "that a double page was often made up of thirty-six small blocks bolted together. After a

drawing was roughly outlined, the block was divided into a number of pieces, on which, if the time was limited, several artists worked. Numbers of times Abbey and I sat together working on the figures in a drawing, while Charles Graham or Theodore Davis ('Dory,' we called him) drew in the architecture or landscape. I would draw the figures in the middle distance and Abbey those in the foreground. Sometimes he would leave a figure roughly outlined and tell me to finish it. Naturally I would demur—no, I couldn't do it. Then he would laugh, hand me the block and coach me through it. Often, as we sat there, he opened up some subject that would broaden my horizon instantly—never any long disquisition, but just enough to set me thinking on new lines. All during the year from the autumn of '77 to that of '78 I enjoyed these occasional meetings in the Art Department and came in contact with the many sides of his kaleidoscopic genius.

" To Abbey, perhaps more than anyone else, was due the introduction among illustrators of careful work from the model, and, for all details, from nature itself. I remember one morning in the spring of 1878 meeting him in front of the old Union Square Theatre in 14th Street. He was, as usual, dressed with the greatest care, but in his arms he carried a huge wooden tub, out of which grew an English ivy vine trained high on a wooden frame and towering far above his head. This piece of artistic 'property' he had borrowed from a florist on 4th Avenue, and was carrying it to his studio in 13th Street. Down Broadway, all unconscious of the passers-by, he carried his burden; and when I left him at the foot of four flights of stairs he looked back with a cheerful grin, joyous over the bit of old England he had captured in the heart of New York. To anyone who knew Abbey and knew how careful he was of appearances, this little incident tells the story of his faithfulness in his study of details for his drawings.

"One of the pleasantest memories of those days was the beautiful friendship that existed between Mr. Parsons, then about sixty years of age, and Abbey, in his early twenties. And while in artistic workmanship Abbey was exploring paths that Charles Parsons had never

trod, and trying new art methods which were contrary to every tradition that Mr. Parsons had been brought up to revere, the older man was broad enough to see that Abbey's way led upward, and, if he sometimes held the younger man back a little, it was generally on some point of fundamental truth which only enabled him to get a firmer foothold."—In a recent letter to Mrs. Abbey, Mr. Rogers says further that he most vividly remembers Abbey's helpfulness. "One of his most charming traits," he writes, "was his helpfulness. There was no limit to the generous outpouring of his knowledge to anyone who had the desire to learn; and if one succeeded in producing something he thought worth while, he would greet it with enthusiasm. The first opportunity I had in *Harper's Magazine* was the illustration of an article on a Brooklyn hospital. I made all the sketches at the hospital and some of the finished drawings. The others were made by Abbey and Reinhart. When they appeared in the magazine Abbey came to me, smiling all over, and declared that I had made more of my subjects than either he or Reinhart. Now, of course, it wasn't so; and I had no illusions about it then or since—*but Abbey said it was so.*

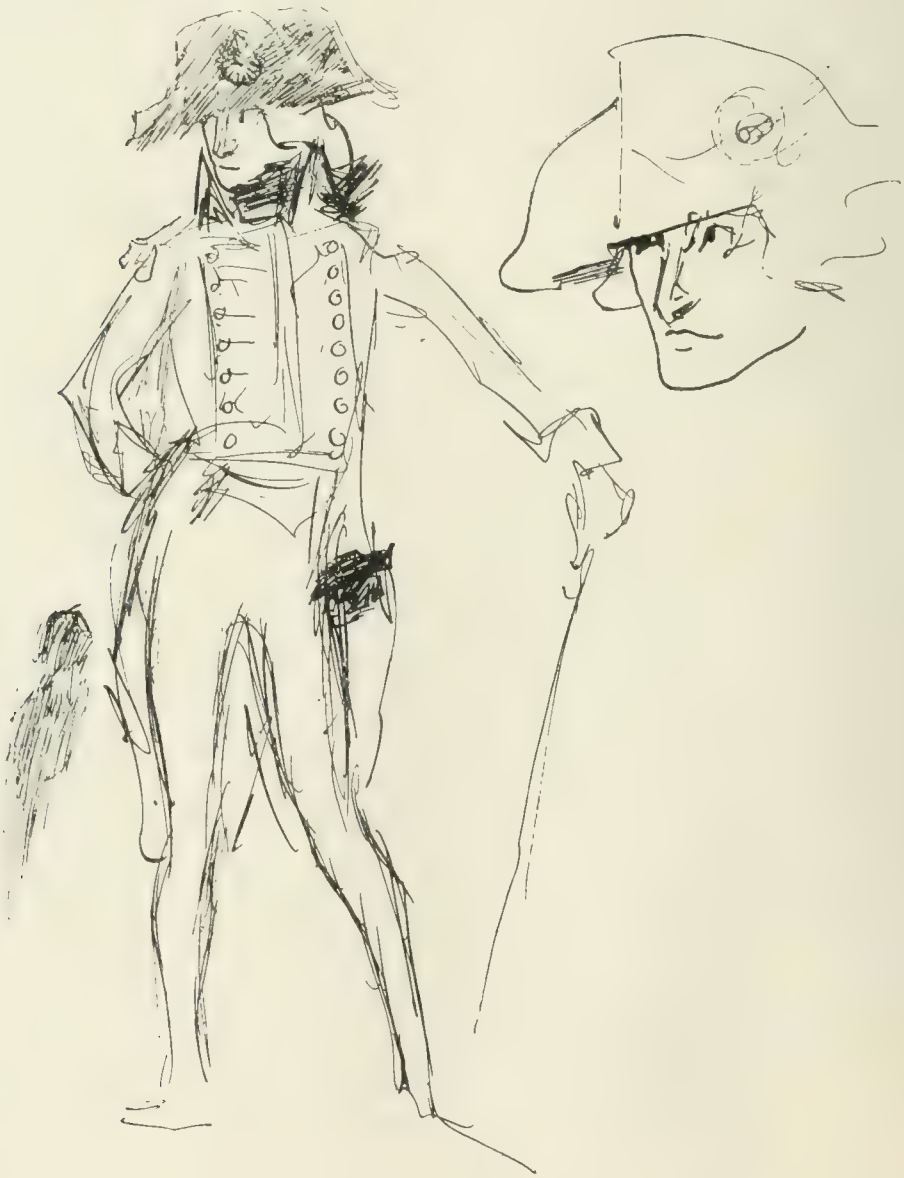
"Then when he came back from England [in 1882] the first thing he said to me, in the Art Department, was: 'Your pictures of 'Toby Tyler' have made you—they used to make me dreadfully homesick, they were so true.' But he did not stop at telling these things to me; he told them to Mr. Parsons and the Harpers." Although we shall return to Mr. Rogers' narrative, his last words may with more propriety be quoted here: "One thing is strongly consoling to me—it is that so much of him was pure spirit that, more than almost anyone I know, he lives on in the hearts of those who knew him well and loved him much."

Reference was made just now to Abbey's studio in 13th Street. But before he took one for himself alone he did some work in that which Reinhart and Willard Snyder shared, Mr. Kelly tells us, adding "I went in one afternoon and found them at work on panels for the frieze for Harpers' reception room. Abbey was painting an old-time wood engraver; the background showing a view of some

quaint houses from the window. He called out laughingly to Reinhart, who was at work beside him, 'I've sprung a red roof on you.' This was his first wall decoration, I believe." The year 1876 was important to Abbey not merely for Harpers' re-recognition of his value and its consequent stimulus to his artistic development, but for the quickening of ambition which he found in the study of the foreign contemporary paintings brought together at Philadelphia in the Centennial Exhibition, and particularly those in the English section. Again and again in after life he told of the disturbance and restlessness which they set up in his mind and the immense fillip they gave to his determination. To quote from the unposted letter to Mr. Low, in 1908, which has already been so useful, the Centennial Exhibition, Abbey says, was "my great eye-opener. That show had an 'Art Section' which was really a great one. England's exhibit was to my mind by far the most interesting and inspiring—and I can close my eyes now and see nearly every picture in it and its position in the rooms: Leighton's 'Summer Moon' and 'House in Damascus,' Watts's portraits of Leighton and of Millais; Fildes's 'Casuals'; Brett's 'Cornish Lions'; Pettie's 'Sanctuary' and portrait of Boughton, etc., etc., and they seemed to me infinitely superior to the French show—with, among other things, Carolus Duran's 'Croizette' on a horse, and Becker's 'Rizpah,' and other things in the vein of the latter with which I had scant sympathy. For I had been an omnivorous reader while at Harpers', and after that, too, perhaps, and these English things told me something of the things I had read about, and reflected the ideals of the country that interested me so much. . . . The young men I knew—I didn't know many—admired Fortuny and the various things we saw at Goupil's. I admired some of 'em myself, but my heart lay with the English."—That, it must be borne in mind, was written in 1908, when from a serene altitude the artist could look back on his career and see every step of the way.

About 1877 Abbey's return to the Art Department began to tell, and we see his influence very clearly in the magazine. Not only were his own contributions stronger and more vivacious but the general

tone of illustration was improving. Among his work are an admirable series of drawings for a comic story for children entitled "Fizz and Freeze"; three drawings from a poem called "The Deacon's Lament"; and another set to illustrate a long poem by Troubridge entitled "The Book of Gold."



CHAPTER VIII

THE TILE CLUB

1877–1878 Aged 25–26

An Epoch-Making Year in American Art—Influence of Paris and Munich—Abbey and England—The Society of American Artists—The Fashion for Applied Art—The Birth of a Confederation—A List of Sobriquets—A New Word and its Coiner—William "Polyphemus" Laffan—A Week on Long Island

ABBEY was not alone in feeling the stimulus of the Centennial Exhibition. In fact, the birth of modern American art may be dated then, although where Abbey was impressed rather by the classic English painters, most of his young compatriots were more disposed to follow the influence of Paris and Munich. No matter from what nationality the impetus, the interesting circumstance is that in 1877, the year following, the National Academy of Design, which corresponds in America to the Royal Academy in England, accepted several large pictures of native production but foreign in their character, which caused one of those sensations that are of periodical recurrence in the history of Art. Protests were raised, and the result was a cleavage among artists and art critics from which proceeded the newly formed Society of American Artists. Abbey belonged neither to the Academy of Design nor to the new association; but his sympathies were rather with the parent body, as were those, among others, of Winslow Homer and Eastman Johnson. The English painters at the Centennial, and particularly the Pre-Raphaelites, still held his allegiance.

Writing to Mr. Low many years later, on this very subject, he said: "Taking all this terrifically seriously as I did then (I suppose as we all did), some of the things you chaps admired seemed to me almost wicked! I couldn't see the use of painting or drawing unless we said something in a *sympathetic* way. I recall well at one of the private views or something . . . that you pointed out to me a head of a hideous girl and remarked upon its qualities. I couldn't *bear* it! Then there was a dull little thing – a head that appeared

to be done from an old photograph. It seemed to me dull and meaningless beyond expression. I was wrong, but I was young, and I retired more and more into myself."

Mr. Low, however, does not seem to have thought Abbey either wrong or immature. In a letter written in the spring of 1917, he says, "I remember on my return from Europe early in 1878 seeing on his easel a charming water-colour of a young girl (leaning against a stile, I think), replete with grace, in which I recognised for the first time a new phase of his remarkable talent. . . . It must not be forgotten that however much his work improved, even to the last, he went to England an artist formed. In fact, to the discerning, to one like me who knew his work from the first, it is interesting to see through all its development the traces of his earliest efforts: certain types portrayed with ever-increasing mastery but observed or conceived in his adolescent years. Of course," Mr. Low concludes, "I recognise all that England did for Abbey —including that last touching honour, to pause, in the midst of war, to erect [this was in March, 1917] the memorial tablet; but we did something for England as well in giving so gifted a being into their hands—their generous hands, in truth."

Continuing his letter to Mr. Low, Abbey says, after the phrase "and I retired more and more into myself": "I liked all you chaps [the home-coming Americans with French methods]; you were a breath of very fresh air, but I thought you should be doing something else. That is probably what you all thought of me too, for I wasn't asked to join the new society [the Society of American Artists], for which I dare say I wasn't ripe." And, then, after reverting to his English sympathies and the hold of him which the Pre-Raphaelites had taken, he concludes, "Well, there it was! The things I enjoyed with my whole heart you didn't care for—most of you in the least—and there it was." Had he remained in New York, to take his part in this renaissance, there is no saying how he might have developed; but he was fated very shortly to emigrate to the Old World, where he was thenceforward to live and work, and where in all his great career there was no halt in the progress of his art.

Many of the men who were thus suddenly to bring America to the fore in the world of art were Abbey's fellow members in the Tile Club, of which it is time to speak. The Tile Club owed its existence to that wave of fashion for decorative art which in 1877 surged across the Atlantic from England, where William Morris and De Morgan and Alma Tadema were working each in his own decorative way, and washed the shores of New York. Rather taken by this new movement to get beauty into domesticity, a number of New York artists, of whom Abbey was not the least enterprising, met one evening and fell to an informal consultation as to what might be done in New York. From their deliberations the scheme of the Tile Club emerged.

Various suggestions having been made during the discussion(the record, in *Scribner's Magazine*, is from the pen of another original member, the late William Laffan—an Irish artist and journalist connected with Harpers', who, later in life, became the editor and proprietor of the New York *Sun*, and was one of Abbey's closest friends), a "large artist of architectural proclivities" settled the matter. "There is," said he, "no object that so readily supplies this deficiency (decorative utility) or that tells so on all its surroundings, as the tile. Let us do tiles!" Finally someone suggested: "Why should we not all meet once a week and each man do a tile?"

"This was early in the autumn of 1877, when studios were being dusted out and men were going around and smoking fraternal pipes with one another and comparing notes about the results of the summer work out of doors. There was more or less preliminary talk on the subject, and it was finally agreed that meetings should be held in one another's studios, every Wednesday evening, and that those participating should possess each in turn the results of one evening's work. It was determined, in an informal sort of fashion, to adopt the title of 'The Tile Club,' and to maintain it as a body without officers, limited in the number of its members to twelve, and to dispense altogether with entrance fees or dues of any description. It was understood that the tiles for each evening were to be supplied by the person to whom when done

they would accrue; and the same person was permitted to supply some other things, but under rigorous restrictions. Cheese and certain familiar species of crackers were admissible. Sardines were not prohibited. Clay or corn-cob pipes and tobacco and stone bottles of cider, and a variety of German ink not unknown to commerce completed the list. . . . The tiles that it was decided to use were those of Spanish make, of a cream-white colour, glazed upon one side, and in size eight inches square. Designs drawn upon them in mineral colours are subsequently 'fired' in an oven and permanently glazed in. This process changes some colours entirely and it greatly improves the design by the brilliancy it imparts to the colour and the manner in which it softens the outline. The first meeting of the Tile Club was called and was attended by two persons, whose feelings may be imagined. They painted two tiles, but as there is no record of those objects of art their authors are supposed to have relieved themselves by throwing them at each other. These two primeval tilers were respectively known as the 'Gaul' and the 'Grasshopper.' "

So far, Mr. Laffan. Here let it be stated that every new member of the Tile Club had to drop his own name and assume another; but whether he himself chose it or whether it was thrust upon him, I am not sure. More probably it was thrust upon him. Each member having acquired his *sobriquet* had to design a seal emblematic of it. The "Gaul" was Gilbert Gaul, some of whose reminiscences of Abbey we have seen; and the "Grasshopper" was the late Swain Gifford, the landscape painter.

Abbey was known as the "Chestnut," and his seal was a burr surrounded by the word "Chestnut," the origin of this style being explained by a fellow member, Earl Shinn (writing as Edward Strahan), some years later, in an article to which we shall come in its right place, but from which a little may now be quoted. Honour where honour is due; it is to Abbey, even although somewhat tortuously, that the use of the word "chestnut," as signifying an old, stale story—something that has been heard before—is due. "We all," says Mr. Shinn, "have our titillable spot of vanity,

and Abbey, who thought nothing of many of the common sources of personal pride, was probably a little vain of having added a word to the English language." Although his conception of a chestnut was different from that of the majority of us to-day, he it was who led up to its present sense. Abbey's chestnut was a "spoof" story —a story, that is, which went nowhere and never finished. It had something to do with the number of chestnuts on a tree, and could be carried on indefinitely, with endless ramifications, and was told with a face of profound gravity, until at last the purpose of the narrator broke on the baffled and patiently expectant audience and they burst into laughter. Before that moment, however, the more astute listeners would gradually have stolen away to enjoy the joke in corridors apart.

"This reprehensible hoax of Abbey's was little by little quoted in social circles as a symbol. English literary men who had heard it, and been taken in by it, began to use the title in their writings as a type of an endless or unsatisfactory yarn. And the word chestnut crossing the sea returned again to the land of its birth and became the accepted definition of what is tedious, old, and interminable." —Thus do we find humorous artists also among the neologists.

So much for Abbey's nickname. Among the others the "Terrapin" was Frederick Dielman, the painter and one time President of the National Academy; the "Puritan" was Boughton, so called from his favourite subjects only; "Sirius" was Reinhart; Laffan, having lost one eye, was "Polyphemus"; Arthur Quartley, the sea painter, was the "Marine"; Julian Weir was "Cadmium"; Stanford White, the architect, was the "Builder"; W. A. Paton was the "Haggis"; Napoleon Sarony was the "Hawk"; F. Hopkinson Smith was the "Owl"; Frank Millet was the "Bulgarian"; Elihu Vedder was the "Bishop"; William Chase was "Briareus"; A. B. Frost was the "Icicle"; Augustus St. Gaudens was the "Saint"; and so on. The list—by no means a complete one—is sufficient to show that the best artists of that day were members of this very pleasant fraternity; and since artists rarely refrain from talking shop we may be sure that Abbey, who was among the youngest and most enthusiastic and

impressionable, lost nothing by meeting so many brother-brushes on terms of intimacy. Of the Tile Club men just mentioned three or four were to become his close friends—such as St. Gaudens, the sculptor, who, in 1877, was twenty-nine, Millet, and Boughton.

The painting of tiles was diversified by music, an innovation for which, according to Laffan, Abbey was largely responsible. "One evening the 'Chestnut' opened a piano, sat him down thoughtlessly and played. This he did in an artless and simple style, so free from the conventionality of the schools, and so fresh, original, and unhackneyed in its quality, that the club was delighted, and the 'Gaul' left the apartment. To correct any false impression which this latter statement might create, it should be stated at once that he presently returned with a case, from which he took a cherished violin. Nimbly attuning the same, while across his amiable features there expanded a prodigious smile, he made it to discourse most prettily a choice and pleasing ballad, whereto the 'Chestnut' afforded a discriminating accompaniment. From that evening music became a feature of the meetings of the Tile Club."

So much for the Tile Club in New York in its early stages. Laffan goes on to describe it on holiday, for in the summer of 1878 most of the members set out to discover Long Island, although Abbey had desired the Catskills. On June 10th the party met at Hunters' Point for a week's fun. One of the most interesting spots on the island is Easthampton, where John Howard Payne, the author of "Home, Sweet Home," is said to have been born, notwithstanding that both Boston and New York also claim him as a native. Easthampton having become an established Mecca, the Tilers, although far from harbouring the reverence proper to such pilgrimages, went there, too. That they enjoyed the jaunt Laffan's record makes abundantly clear; but there is no space to quote it.

And here for the present the proceedings of the Tile Club cease to concern us, for by the end of 1878 Abbey had left for England, so that when, in 1879, the Club, with increased daring, hired a suitable vessel, the *John C. Earle*, and cruised on the Erie Canal, he was not with them. In 1881 we shall meet the Club again.

CHAPTER IX

END OF NEW YORK CAREER

1878 Aged 25–26

A Critical Year—Mr. Gilbert Gaul and Mr. Kelly—Theatrical Drawings—Mr. Brander Matthews' Bookplate—"A Rose in October"—Abbey Decides for England—Two Farewell Parties—Abbey and the Old Country

THE year 1878 was a critical one in Abbey's career because it was then that he embarked upon so momentous an enterprise as a journey to England. The occasion for it was the firm's recognition that the Herrick drawings had become sufficiently attractive to be worth fortifying by authentic English backgrounds and atmosphere, together with the immediate need of illustrations for an article on Stratford-on-Avon; but we know that the Old Country had been luring Abbey ever since the Centennial Exhibition in 1876. "I came," he said, in a speech at a Pilgrims' lunch in his honour in 1908, "as soon as I could—because a collection of English works of art was shown at Philadelphia which profoundly impressed me."

Before, however, we reach the time for Abbey's departure, let us glance at his work in 1878. In this, the last year of his New York period, from February 1st, 1878, he had a studio in the Y.M.C.A. building at 52 East 23rd Street, opposite the National Academy of Design—Room 25—among his artist neighbours being Swain Gifford in 26 and Louis Tiffany and William Sartain in 28. Immediately before that he had been at 51 West 10th Street, and it was there that Mr. Gaul one day found him at work on some theatrical drawings for *Scribner's Monthly*. Mr. Gaul's reminiscence bears upon Abbey's powers of divided attention. "His work," he writes, "was always a source of wonder to me, and one of the most wonderful things about it was the ease with which it was done—thrown off without effort or any that was apparent. I found him doing an illustration for an article on the stage. This article, though unsigned, was by Brander Matthews, now Professor of Dramatic

Literature at Columbia. Coghlan, then of Wallack's stock company, was posing for a portrait in costume—blue satin with much lace, I remember—and Miss Keenan was also there waiting her turn to pose for one of his Puritan maids. At a table was a number of men interested in a game of cards. Everyone was smiling and talkative, except Mr. Coghlan, whose pose proscribed change of expression and action, and he seemed to be the only person taking life at all seriously. Abbey worked all the time, but it looked like play. He kept in touch with the conversation, and often took part in it, while at other times a quiet smile was the only indication that he had caught a remark intended for him."

The commission is peculiarly interesting, for it is not impossible that while Abbey was at work on the drawings with sittings from the performers in costume—Charles Surface, Bob Acres, Sir Peter Teazle, and so forth—he began to think with more seriousness of the attractions of the eighteenth century in England, a period that he was to make his own. It was a natural step—for him—from the artifice of *The School for Scandal* to the fresher and more congenial atmosphere of *She Stoops to Conquer*, with which his name is so happily associated.

The New York theatrical drawings were republished in 1885 in an edition of Sheridan's Comedies prepared by Professor Brander Matthews, who, in his pleasant autobiographical volume published in 1917 under the title *These Many Years*, says that his friendship with Abbey began at the time when the illustrations were being made. "With his customary kindness," says Mr. Matthews, "he offered to design a book-plate for me, if I could supply an idea for his pictorial treatment. I suggested that as I was an American interested in the drama he might portray an Indian gazing at a Greek comic mask." When the book-plate was done Mr. Matthews asked Abbey where he had found the Indian. He answered, "I posed an Irishman for that. Irishmen make thundering good Indians."

A further reminiscence by Mr. Kelly shows us Abbey in his own studio. "There I found him one afternoon [in 1878] at work on a beautiful girl"—Maggie Keenan once more. The picture was "A

Rose in October" in water-colour, and Abbey was painting against time, for it was the sending-in day. "While at work on this," says Mr. Kelly, "he seemed to be in a despondent mood. He said, 'I have such a short stroke I feel as if I will never be a great painter.' The critics gave the answer the next day, for the picture was the success of the year."

Some correspondence with Anthony, the engraver, who was then with Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., tells us that Abbey had accepted a commission for the Boston firm to contribute to an illustrated edition of Longfellow. "King Olaf's Saga" was one of the poems, and we find Abbey writing, "I sometimes envy these fellows who can reel things right off—anything that comes in: figures, marines, landscapes, still life, animals—anything in fact. I can't find anything in the libraries that will give me that material I want for the Swedish landscape and priests' costume, etc. If you will kindly let me know of some work containing matter of this description I will be very much obliged. Do give us something a little easier next time. I think single figures in meditation, 'maidens fancy free,' etc., are more in my line."

The proposition for the great English adventure was formally made in November, and this is Abbey's reply:

"My dear Mr. Parsons,

"I have thought very carefully over the project of my going to London and the proposal you are so kind as to make me.

"I should like to go, of course—and I know it would be of great advantage to me—but I think I would be doing myself injustice did I accept the proposition as I understand you to make it.

"If I take the money you have so kindly placed at my disposal (600 dollars) it would be a long time before I could hope to work it off (at 50 dollars a page), and the consequence would be I should be always in debt, which you know I'm pretty tired of. The next batch of drawings I bring in will make me all clear—and I want to stay so.

"I have been offered a great deal of work of late at twice the prices I receive from you, and in one case more than that, and to-day I received an order from Cassell of London for two drawings which I

could have charged my own price for. These I was obliged to reject because I could not do them with the other work I have promised.

"It seems to me that I should not go over unless I received in advance what it would cost me to make the change—say 500 dollars—and that I should then receive the same price that I could get here for the same kind of work.

"You know that I am attached to *Harper's Magazine*, and would do more for them and at less prices than anyone else—but you also know how I am situated and how necessary it is for me to put myself in a way to assist those dependent upon me as quickly as possible.

"These are the reasons which lead me to decline your proposition. If the Harpers are willing to advance me 500 dollars now and pay me 75 a page for the work I do—it being understood that I am guaranteed all the work I can do for one year and that I am at liberty to return the 500 dollars in work during the year—I think I would be willing to go. I presume this will appear high to you—it does to me—or did—but I find I can earn it, and I am glad I can.

"Very respectfully,

"E. A. Abbey.

"51 West 10th Street,

"Friday, November 8th, 1878."

This letter gives us the first information we have received that Abbey had any financial worries: not only of his own, but family liabilities too, which, as the correspondence of the next few years shows us, were long with him. The embarrassments of his father were probably due to a want of business ability; the artist's own were caused by a careless open-handedness and that thoroughness of purpose which distinguished him through life, making it imperative that he should provide himself with the best accessories of his calling, whether models, costumes, or books.

In 1878 Thomas Hardy's *Return of the Native* and William Black's *Macleod of Dare* were running through the magazine. Abbey had a few drawings, among them some illustrations to an article on Tunbridge Wells, which he would have done better a year or so later, one of his colleagues on this joint task being Willard Snyder. Ano-

EDWIN A. ABBEY

Circa 1878.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY SARONY, OF NEW YORK.

ther Herrick drawing is to be found in the October number, illustrating "Ye Bellman"—this to reappear in the volume in 1882 without any change. The Christmas number for 1878 contains evidence of his remarkable versatility, for in it he illustrated three Christmas poems, a serious story by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and a comic short story by Rose Terry Cooke.

All arrangements for the English visit being complete—the result probably of compromise on both sides—Abbey made his plans to sail early in December. Such an event as the departure for Europe of a popular Tile Club member could not, of course, be allowed to pass without ceremony; and he was fêted and speeded by his friends, first at dinner by the Tile Club, and then at breakfast, on the day of sailing, by the staff of Harpers'. The Tile Club's dinner was at the Westminster Hotel on November 20th, and the menu card, signed by all the guests, has been preserved. The names run thus: Charles Parsons, Gedney Bunce, W. M. Abbey (Abbey's father), A. W. Drake, Walter Paris, Edward Wimbridge, Winslow Homer, W. R. O'Donovan, W. C. Brownell, Antonio Knauth, Charles Montagu Waud, Gustav Kobbé, F. Hopkinson Smith, Charles H. Isham, William Shippen, J. Lewenberg, J. Alden Weir, William M. Chase, R. W. Gilder, Charles Reinhart, Earl Shinn, W. C. Baird, Charles W. Truslow, S. G. W. Benjamin, Arthur Quartley, W. "Polyphemus" Laffan, and Abbey himself. Nearly forty years have passed since that merry evening, and to-day only one or two of the guests survive.

The Harper breakfast was on December 7th, and the menu, which has also been preserved, is signed by the following names, under that of the guest: W. R. O'Donovan, Arthur Burdett Frost, Thomas Nast, William M. Chase, Charles Parsons, William A. Seaver, John Harper, C. S. Reinhart, Ivan P. Pranishnikoff, R. Swain Gifford, Walter Shirlaw, S. S. Conant, Arthur Quartley, Edmund C. Stedman, J. Alden Weir, J. Henry Harper. Of this company only three or four are now (1919) living. Speaking, in 1908, in the height of his fame, at the Pilgrims' lunch to which reference has already been made, Abbey humorously referred to this breakfast, remark-

ing that often afterwards, in his early days in England, the reflection was forced upon him that the money which the meal had cost (it was given at Delmonico's and a four-in-hand bore the guests to the docks) would have been an even more agreeable thing to have. But this is to anticipate.

To what extent the young voyager was made unhappy by thoughts of exile, we cannot say. No doubt excitement carried him high, for how could it not, with his youth (not yet twenty-six)—and the fulfilment of his wish to see at last the land of his heart's desire? But, on the other hand, he was of an affectionate nature and was leaving not only his native country but his father and mother. Since in one of his letters to his mother, written on board, he says, "I chirked up wonderfully at the breakfast," we must assume that before that event he had been depressed. "I was half an hour late," he writes in the same letter, "and the whole crowd were waiting for me and wondering. It was a bad breakfast to go to sea on. I counted up thirty-six people who came to see me off. The last fellow I saw was old Weir climbing up a post and waving a handkerchief on a stick. He and Frost were the only fellows I could recognise in the gang that rushed out of the pier doors when they opened them."

And there, on this December day in 1878, as the *Germanic's* propellers began to revolve and all the friends on the quay waved farewell and godspeed, ended the first phase of Abbey's life. Little though he suspected it, he was leaving America for ever. A brief visit now and then was all that he was to pay the land of his birth and the land of which he was so proud to be a son and for which he continued to toil until the end of his life. Henceforward, although always he clung passionately to his American nationality, his home was to be in England.

Destiny plays us strange tricks. This young American's purpose in sailing for the Old Country was, as we have seen, to do no more than gather enough English atmosphere to qualify him to complete an edition of Herrick and attack other kindred themes with authority. He little thought that he was not only to make his home there, and live his life there, but to become the quintessential deli-

neator of the England of the past. Yet so it was. This visitor from the New World was destined to do more towards the visible reconstruction of English life of the past than any other man; and when, on March 13th, 1917, a tablet to Abbey's memory, set up by his friends, and calling him "beloved both in the country of his birth and that of his adoption," was unveiled in the crypt of St. Paul's, the then American Ambassador, the late Dr. Page, in a brief address, laid emphasis upon that part of the artist's life which was spent in instructing the New World in the charms and graces of the old.

England was to Abbey a happy hunting ground indeed, but primarily only that the spoils of the chase might be set before the eyes of his compatriots, to delight and enlighten them. He may be said to have come to England as a kind of retrospective Columbus, and every drawing that he sent back, in many of the years of hard work that were now to follow, was another proof of how fair a land he had discovered and how well he had discovered it.

CHAPTER X

STRATFORD-ON-AVON

1878 Aged 26

Companions of the Voyage—Abbey's Illustrated Letters—First Sight of England—Stratford-on-Avon—Washington Irving and Abbey—An English Christmas—Financial Embarrassments—English Hospitality

WITH the voyage to England begins Abbey's real correspondence, from which I shall borrow copiously during the rest of this book. He wrote, as we have seen and shall see, admirable letters—crystal clear, emphatic, to the point, and full of his almost pugnacious sunniness—and it is fortunate that so many of them have been preserved; but only once again did he ever write with such fulness and regularity as in these early, lonely days in a strange country.

Writing on board, both to his parents and to Charles Parsons, he described the daily routine and his more immediate fellow-passengers. Thus, to his mother: "Professor Youmans is the only one I really know, and he says I'm the only one he really knows, and we take our exercise on deck together. He is really a delightful old chap, and most interesting. He don't know anything about art, and I don't know anything about science, so we enlighten each other. I've heard all about the electric light and the wonders of the great deep, and I listen; and the old man likes to talk, and we have a good time. He is going with Herbert Spencer to pass the winter at Nice; and—would you believe?—he thought Nice was in Italy, and didn't know it was on the Mediterranean. This is the Professor's seventeenth trip, and he's seasick every shot."

These home letters of Abbey's were richly and humorously illustrated, but unhappily the originals no longer exist. Mr. Abbey, senior, copied a few with great care (but, of course, completely losing the spirit of the drawings); the others, together with the originals of the copied ones, were all destroyed. Those to Charles Parsons were also illustrated, but not so amusingly. It is related

that at the time that they were arriving regularly, Abbey's mother replied to the question where had she been of late, by saying that she had been in England, so vividly did her son's descriptions and thumbnail sketches re-create everything there.

The *Germanic* reached the Mersey on December 17th, in typical Mersey weather, which Abbey describes with much feeling. From the White Star's tender he saw England for the first time, and here are his impressions as they approached Liverpool: "I look around for the first time upon someone else's country. I see a high bank covered with light snow, rows of houses sort of terraced up, a battery of stone with short towers at the corners. Everything looks dirty; water is dirty, boats that we pass are beastly dirty, sails almost black. I'm looking away and talking to the Professor about these things, when—down comes the fog, in less time than it takes to say so, denser than ever, and the tooting and ringing begins again. Chilly, damp and disagreeable again. We back and wait for about fifteen minutes. Then the fog lifts a little and right back of us is the landing stage—a long flat with house on it (custom house) and bridges going up on the quay. We tumble off again, and are immediately accosted by the dirtiest newsboys I ever saw, and bootblacks —and for the first time I see a 'Bobby.' Oh! such a funny one. Really his face was so ridiculously like a caricature mask that I thought at first he had one on. All the people look so different somehow—they shuffle about; the boys all wear caps—all ragged and all with small scarfs tightly tied around their necks, the police keeping them out of the way. Newsboys with big printed placards of news hanging in front of them. Ticket porters, real 'Toby Vecks' with brass labels tied on their arms, all in sleeved waistcoats, all with big, heavy, ugly feet and red noses—all small, and all old. Old men with funny-shaped plug hats and black ribbon about their necks, all the poor people with mud up to their armpits. And certainly the poorest-looking people I ever saw. I would never have believed that people would go about looking so desperately wretched. Our tramps are princes to them. They seem to be lame, most of them—anyway they nearly all of them jam their hands away down in their

pockets, and limp. I think of 'Poor Jo,' I think of Fildes's 'Casual Ward' at the Centennial, of Leech's pictures in Dickens—of Charles Keene."

The next morning, after a night at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, Abbey started for Stratford-on-Avon, where he was to make drawings for an article by William Winter, the dramatic critic, who died, at the age of eighty, while this book was in progress. At Stratford Abbey put up at the Red Horse Hotel, and on the evening of his arrival began a letter to Charles Parsons, from which I quote a passage here and there to show not only the young artist's zeal but also the vivacity of his observation: "Sketching out of doors is hard work—and almost an impossibility. The snow falls every two or three hours, and perhaps ends up with a drizzle; then the sun comes out for a few minutes, in a very sickly way, and it gets foggy; and about three it begins to be dark. . . . There are quantities and quantities of quaint little bits all over this town, which is much larger than I expected to find it. The trouble is to select them. Everything has a remarkably neat and swept-up look—the streets are as neat as a pin. I don't know what they can do with their garbage and ashes—there are no traces of anything of the kind about, no boxes of any kind on the side walks, very little in the way of shrubbery. The houses close up against each other, with the ground floor flush with the street, and very low ceilings; sometimes you step down into the shops. There are no trees, no front yards except as you get to the outskirts. The people and carts and things, however, are very interesting, and many of the countrymen who come into the town are very picturesque, reminding me strongly of Keene's drawings in *Punch*. It's really remarkable how true the English illustrators are to the character of the people. I am making many sketches from the window of my little parlour (the same that Washington Irving had when he was here), for to-day is market-day, and as it is the last before Christmas, the market carts, ranged along the wide street, are more than usually numerous—so I'm told—and are gaily decked out with holly and green. They are very picturesque—all two-wheeled affairs, with big covered bodies, and wicker chicken coops,

etc., up behind. They take the horses out and put them in the inn yards. These inns remind me strongly of the old Philadelphia taverns on 2nd Street and in that vicinity. . .

"This hotel reminds me all the time of Dickens. The great fires, rope bell pulls, one labelled 'Boots.' The chambermaids with little flat caps. . . . My little parlour is quite cosy. It's rather larger than Irving said, perhaps 10 by 15 feet. There is a bright fire burning in the same grate that he poked at; his chair in the corner, with a brass label in the back certifying to that fact; a comfortable haircloth sofa with a red pillow and claw feet; a small serving table, with the castors and pickles and a few glasses; a large round table; a small one upon which I draw; a big leather easy chair; some wall chairs; an *étagère* ornamented with railway guides, etc.; on the floor by the fire a japanned funeral urn containing coal; on the walls quantities of framed prints and souvenirs of Irving; little watercolour views about Stratford; red curtains and a venetian blind to the window; and a very sociable, respectable Manx cat without any tail sleeping on the rug before the fire."

There was a peculiar fitness in Abbey's decision to occupy the very room in which Washington Irving, when on a precisely similar adventure and romantic quest, had lodged years before. Between author and artist is no little resemblance. Both were Americans; both had a lover's eye for England, and particularly England of the eighteenth century; both had leanings to what was gentle and pleasant and humorous; and both set before their countrymen the results of their researches—Abbey in thousands of drawings, every one of which might be called a valentine from the Old Country to the New, and Washington Irving in *Bracebridge Hall* and *Old Christmas*. Nothing, of course, but the fact that the work had been perfectly done by one who (as we shall see) was destined to become one of his friends—Randolph Caldecott—prevented Abbey from illustrating also these two books, so near to his own heart and genius. Washington Irving, it may be said, had come to England first, in 1805, from the Continent. In 1815 he returned and remained away from America for seventeen years. His *Sketch*

Book, with its delightful papers on English ways and humours, appeared in 1820, and *Bracebridge Hall*, which carried these descriptions further and almost linked up New York with Addison and Steele, followed in 1822. He died in 1859, when Abbey was seven.

A letter to Mrs. Abbey tells the story of her son's first Christmas on foreign soil: "I was very busy before Christmas, and didn't have time toget homesick. The landlord insisted upon my taking Christmas dinner with his family, which I accepted. Then the 'Waits.' Two or three bands came on Christmas Eve, one made up of choir boys from the church, who sang beautifully. I think there must have been fifteen of them. They sang, each company, pretty much the same carols. 'God rest you, merry gentlemen!' and 'Nowell, Nowell,' seemed to be the favourites. They came again on Christmas night and on Boxing night. On Boxing night I again accepted the hospitality of my kind host, Mr. Colbourn. I was seated to play whist with an old lady who reminded me of 'Mr. F.'s aunt' [in *Little Dorrit*] against this [a drawing here] and her husband. Well, I got out of this after four games, and had a good time 'turning the trencher' with the young folks and Mr. and Mrs. Colbourn. You ought to see these substantial English girls—such red cheeks I *never did* see. They don't say a great deal, unless you get them alone in a corner, and they all have such pretty voices and nice teeth. We had lots of forfeits, and I had to pay a lot—such as we read of: 'bowing to the prettiest,' etc. I was quite a cuss when I got warmed up, and did 'Thatcher,' and a lot of old things which seemed to amuse them greatly, one young lady remarking, 'Hi think the Hamericans HAR so hentertaining!' These people were real Dickens people: hearty Englishmen who went in for a good time, good specimens of English middle-class county townspeople. I wish you could hear them talk. They do stick on the H's in the most alarming way. We had charades after the older folk had retired, and one of the young ladies certainly shewed a great deal of ability in that direction; and then about 12.30 we had supper—cold roast beef and duck, and mincepies and cheese, and *Ale* and tea."—For a young artist who had

come to England to illustrate Herrick and Goldsmith and Praed, and who had most of his sympathies in the merrie past, this was not a bad beginning.

We find further light on Abbey's Stratford-on-Avon adventures in a later passage of the speech to the Pilgrims (in 1908) which has already been quoted; for excessive cold, beyond anything that he had felt in America, and a hearty English Christmas, were not the explorer's only new experiences. He contracted a bad sore throat while sketching in the churchyard, and he contracted debts, too. Continuing, in his dry American way, his remarks to his Pilgrim hosts, Abbey said, "I was given to understand in casual conversation on the way over (in the s.s. *Germanic*) that living in England was—on the whole—cheap. This was a superstition that generally obtained in America at that time, and it gave me a good deal of comfort. . . . The first incautious thing I did was to inquire at the Post Office whether heavy packages of, say, drawings might be sent to America without a postage having been prepaid. I was assured that this was possible and thereupon took a nice private sitting-room at the hotel, and didn't ask for any actual terms.

"This was also incautious.

"I stayed some time and made drawings and sent them off with a 2½d. stamp on them, the balance to be collected, and asked for my bill.

"This bill, although a shock to me, was what you all know it would have been.

"I left my trunks with the landlord and started for London.

"In the train, after very careful calculation, I arrived at the result that I could, with care, last until I received my remittance for the drawings I had sent off to America; which I reasonably expected would be in about three weeks' time.

"When the three weeks were up I had a notice from Washington to the effect that my drawings were held for postage in the dead letter office and would be forwarded to their destination on receipt of the balance due.

"I was a young man of twenty-six, and this was all a long time ago, but I vividly recall those next three weeks.

"I am not sure it wasn't a month.

"It seemed a year."

Here, however, we encroach on the next chapter, but it may be said now that the drawings were in time liberated and appeared in the magazine for April, 1879.

Abbey spent New Year's Eve, 1878, at another social gathering at the Red Horse, among the landlord's family and friends. Writing to his mother a few days later he speaks of the kindness of these hospitable people. "We got to be quite good friends. The lady hurled her H's about in an extraordinary way, but she was good-hearted and jolly. The barmaid was a merry little woman, hard-working, and, I should think, a mighty nice little body. We all sat up over the New Year's Eve, and I thought of you all more than once. I was going to pull the Stratford church bells with a lot of the town young fellows, but it was too cold. They toll for a half-hour before twelve, and then they peal merrily for another half-hour. They had some old friends from Coventry, and the gent was musical and sang nobly 'Arts of Hoak' and 'The Vicar of Bray,' and brewed a rum punch, which was quite acceptable that cold night. Let me ask you whenever a strange young man 'of poor but honest, etc.,' drops in your way, *go for him!* I've been so touched by the warm-hearted way perfect strangers have treated me here that I don't want any Englishman to go to America and meet with any less cordial reception."

CHAPTER XI

ENGLISH FRIENDS AND FAMILY LETTERS

1879 Aged 26–27

Fred Barnard—George Henry Boughton—F. W. Jameson—Dinner Parties—Alfred Parsons—A Musical Evening—Brahms—George Henschel—Madame Clara Moscheles—William Black—J. MacNeill Whistler—Alma Tadema—The White House, Chelsea

WE saw in the last chapter under what circumstances—which might have been far worse had he not fallen into honest hands—Abbey left Stratford. Arriving in London early in January, he took a lodging in Bloomsbury, establishing himself on the fourth floor of No. 32 Montagu Place. If he was not in the highest spirits there were sufficient reasons. To begin with, he was a solitary young foreigner in the largest city of the world. Secondly, he was short of money. Thirdly, he doubted very much whether his Stratford drawings would be acceptable to the powers at Franklin Square. Fourthly, he was suffering both from a cold and disordered digestion. But, guided by his shining good sense, he forced himself to be active. In his own words, to his mother, "I had a sort of feeling if I didn't light out and see somebody artistic or jolly, or at least friendly, soon, I didn't know what dreadful thing I might do. So I hurried out my shaving things, and shaved, brushed my hair, etc., and put myself into some clean linen, and after a few minutes' study of the map I hurried down Tottenham Court Road and took a 'bus marked 'Hampstead, Haverstock Hill, etc.' I went as far as I could go, to the foot of the hill, and, taking the advice of a policeman, I took the second turning to the left, Steele's Road, and looked out all the way along for 'Warrington House.'"

Warrington House was the home of the late Fred Barnard, the illustrator, to whom Abbey had an introduction from Mr. Frost, and who had, by letter, pressed Abbey to come up to town for Christmas. At this time Barnard was thirty-two, and already known as a master of grotesque, chiefly by his illustrations to the

"Household Edition" of Dickens, published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall from 1871 onwards. Later he was to issue a series of "Character Sketches from Dickens" based on his earlier conceptions; and he had done also much work in periodicals.

Barnard, as Abbey tells his mother, was at work on a Dickens picture when he found him. "I was shown into the parlour, facing back on a large half-acre of garden—a big studio extension at the back, too, on the left. Mr. Barnard shortly came into the room and received me warmly, and asked me into the studio, a big room with open raftered roof of oak. He was painting 'Old Gabriel and Dolly Varden,' with Sim Tappertit looking in over the door. A model was on the throne, posed for Gabriel. . . . . I was very kindly invited to come to tea next evening (Sunday) and departed, feeling that I wasn't quite friendless at any rate."

That was on the Saturday; on the Sunday Abbey presented another letter of introduction, this time to a fellow countryman established in London—the late George Henry Boughton, who had recently built "West House," on the top of Campden Hill, which was the scene of so much hospitality. "Oh dear! [exclaims the astonished youth] such a house! Mosaic floor, panelled and tapestried walls, great window on the staircase. The room I was shown into was a large square one, with most beautiful rugs on the floor, and elegant furniture, tiled fireplace, blue china all about, and everything denoting extremely fine taste, and—prosperity. Mr. Boughton was lunching with his family in the adjoining room, separated by portières, and I was asked up into the studio. . . . Mr. Boughton shortly came up. We met in the most everyday manner possible. He said he hadn't read my letter of introduction as he didn't think it necessary, as he knew me so well already. So we had a good talk about America and his old friends, etc."—Boughton, who was to be so valuable an influence in the early London life of his young compatriot, was born on December 4th, 1833, and was thus by nearly twenty years Abbey's senior. It is generally thought that he was of American birth, but, as a matter of fact, he was born near Norwich and did not go to America until the next year. There, however, he remained,

chiefly at Albany, N.Y., with one or two absences in Europe, painting, and exhibiting in New York, until 1860. In that year he settled in Paris, where he studied under Edouard Frère, famous for his cottage domestic interiors. Leaving Paris in 1862, Boughton made London his home, never again to forsake it except for brief spaces of travel. He was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy later in this year, 1879, and became a full R.A. in 1896, in the same year that Abbey was made an Associate. Boughton was never a great painter, but he was an accomplished one, and in both his favourite themes—the peasant life of Brittany and Holland, and the New England days of *The Courtship of Miles Standish*—he was acceptable to collectors. Most of the important modern galleries have samples of his delicate and graceful work. He did also some illustrating, *The Scarlet Letter* and *Rip Van Winkle* being among his best efforts. Although English by birth and for so long a resident in London, Boughton always called himself an American. Abbey could not have had at that time a kinder friend or a more wisely useful one. Boughton and he were destined to be firm and materially helpful allies for many years; but this we shall learn from the letters.

Meanwhile, the Bloomsbury attic having been found impossible, Abbey, on the recommendation of another American artist settled in London, the late Ernest Parton, moved to Newman Street. The house was No. 80. At No. 14 Abbey's fellow Philadelphian and predecessor as an historical painter and R.A., Benjamin West, had lived for forty-five years: Newman Street, which is off Oxford Street, being in the early years of the last century the very centre of artistic London. No sooner was he settled than Abbey began to work seriously on the drawings for Longfellow's *Evangeline*, while by way of recreation he walked about London on expeditions of discovery, and was delighted to find how much of it was already known to him through pictures. In the evenings Boughton took him to this house and that—one evening to the American Minister's reception to General Grant, another to a musical party, and so forth.

One of these musical parties, at the house of the late Fred Jameson, the architect (known familiarly as "Jampots"), a very sociable and

hospitable figure in London at that time, led to an invitation to a dinner which Abbey describes very minutely to his mother. Here is an amusing passage: "I wish I could write you all of it. Now I remembered seeing a drawing-room in *Punch* once, of a gentleman, as the ladies rise to leave the dining-room, opening the cupboard door by mistake, to allow them to pass out. I remembered this, and imagined it to be the thing to do—so, as I was nearest the door I rose and held it for them. I seem to have a pretty good memory, for nobody ever told me that. Every little thing we hear or read of is of some use some day.

"I got through my first dinner very well. English people are so plagued particular about etiquette that I was scared I'd come out wrong. However, Boughton coached me up. I mustn't get there more than five minutes before the time I'm asked, nor on any account two minutes after." At the end of this letter, dated January, 1879, he draws a girl beside these words: "This is Miss Gow; I think I'll marry her. A girl who'll eat cold beef at an evening party is too valuable to be lightly passed over." Miss Gow, who has since become known to fame as Mary Gow, R.I., the water-colour painter of portraits and charming decorative subjects, married otherwise, her husband being Mr. Sydney P. Hall, the artist. But for the burning of the originals of these letters of Abbey to his family, Miss Gow's portrait could be reproduced.

A further piece of news is that on the Monday following Abbey was to move into a studio at 80 Peel Street, Campden Hill, close to Boughton's, this being let to him by the late Matthew Ridley Corbet, the landscape painter. From this studio the next letter, on January 27th, was written: "I hadn't been here half an hour before I was drawing away as hard as I could at my easel, Boughton sitting by and giving me valuable hints. He asked me to come in to dinner on Friday night as Aldrich and his wife were to be there, and old Robert Browning and J. W. Comyns Carr, the writer on art. I went and had a lovely time. . . . Browning wasn't at all the man I expected to see. I knew his face, of course, but he is a rather short, dumpy, dapper old chap, and a most entertaining talker. Aldrich is remark-

ably witty, and so is Boughton, and I tell you it was a bright table." Aldrich was the late Thomas Bailey Aldrich, the American poet. Comyns Carr died as recently as 1916. In 1879 Browning was sixty-seven, and was living in Warwick Crescent.

We have now reached January 27th, 1879. The next day was an eventful one, for it was then, according to the diary kept by the new friend who here enters the scene, at a party at Mr. E. M. Hale's studio, that Abbey met Alfred Parsons—an artist who was destined for several years to be not only one of his closest companions but a sympathetic ally in all his projects and often an actual collaborator. Alfred Parsons, already well-known as a flower and landscape painter, was then thirty-two, and Abbey's senior by over four years. A sympathetic note was instantly struck. One great bond between them was this England of ours, which the elder man knew so deeply and lovingly and the younger man so longed to know. Already was Alfred Parsons's name a household word by reason of his delineations of the English countryside—its meadows, its flowers, its trees, its streams, its tender skies: all of which he had been studying since a child and has been studying ever since, throughout a long and distinguished career.

"What a lucky fellow I am [Abbey writes] to drop right into the society I most enjoy and from which I can learn so much," a remark which leads to a description of another musical party. "When I got there I found a large square room in the centre of which was a four-sided music stand with lights, and around it four fellows fiddling away for dear life, at an allegretto movement in one of Beethoven's symphonies. . . . There were possibly a dozen there—all musical people, amateurs and professionals. Johann Brahms (of the 'Hungarian Dances' chap) was one. We had lots of fine music. A great big chap (Berlin correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*) played magnificently. I don't know when I've enjoyed anything more. He played several Russian things of the most lovely character, and with the most exquisite feeling and touch. . . . After this we had Schumann's String Quartette—*the* quartette!—for the piano, for which our Berlin friend took off his coat, and undid his

vest and collar. I certainly never heard it played so well. I occupied a big chair by the fire all by myself, the rest of the company being at the other side of the room, and I tell you, I enjoyed it 'to the top of my bent.' I wrote a note to Jameson to thank him for being the means of giving me so much pleasure." Brahms was, of course, the great Brahms, who died in 1897, and in 1879 was forty-five; the musical journalist was the late William Beatty Kingston. Abbey was always intensely fond of music. He was also to some extent a performer—that is to say, he could play well enough to amuse himself at the piano—but probably to no one was the pianola, when, years later, it sprang from some inventor's brain, a richer boon than to him.

Through Boughton's good offices he was meeting artists too, having the use of the best models and making many acquaintances. Among these, for example, was Gustave Natorp—an Austrian who had lived in America and studied art and was now a wealthy connoisseur and amateur sculptor. Natorp, who had taken Boughton's old house in Palace Gardens Terrace and was a famous gastronome, not only entertained Abbey regally but lent him valuable pieces of furniture to draw from. As for artists, Abbey tells of a dinner with Boughton at the Arts Club, at which R. W. Macbeth, Fred Barnard, Marcus Stone, Charles Green, and J. D. Linton were present, followed by a migration to the Grosvenor Gallery to a "discussion about the copyright that artists ought to have and haven't. Frith, Albert Moore, Herkomer, Sir Coutts Lindsay, and a lot more spoke. . . . I sat by Barnard and nearly killed myself trying not to laugh at his running comments on the speeches. He had the fellows all about on a broad grin."

Music again, and an historic evening for a young enthusiast, for the scene was the studio of the late Felix Moscheles, who died in 1918, the son of Mendelssohn's two closest friends. "I think I have kept Ash Wednesday better than by going to church. Boughton took me. We went first to the Arts Club and had dinner, and then to a little place in Cadogan Gardens, down a step into a garden, and back to a pretty cottage, and knocked. When the servant

came we asked her, 'Is Mr. Moscheles at home?' 'Not here,' she said, 'I'll show you.' So we followed her through the garden around the corner of the house, and up a little flagged walk to a very modest looking door, with a lantern over it, which was opened by a spruce little boy with an immense eruption of buttons. A little L of a hall, the walls covered with bagging stuff embroidered a little with worsted. The back of the hall door was panelled with glass, and we brushed up our hair, and were shown into the dining-room, a low, bright room with a queer Moorish lamp over the table covered with sage green, upon which were several glasses of lilies of the valley and white hyacinths. The chairs (old ones of the square Cromwell pattern) covered with deep red, and the walls covered with artistic knick-knacks of every description. A wide door, and an immense studio beyond, lighted from the top. A pleasant grey-headed man came forward with 'Hush-sh a moment! Henschel is just beginning to play a scherzo of his own.' So we sat just inside the door and heard him.

"It was like getting in somewhere and having a good rest. I had been labouring all day, and the day before, and the night before, too, at a face of Keats's Madeline, and I was all worked out and feeling that it was a very Ashy sort of a Wednesday indeed, when Boughton came in this afternoon with 'Don't think I'm going to bore your life out coming so often, but I want you to come with me this evening and dine at the club, and we'll go to the Moscheles "evening" afterwards. And, what's the matter? Oh, the face? Ah, it's coming better—you'll get it. I've been reading over the poem since I came in yesterday, and I thought you were getting her a little too old. Just make the lower part of the face a little fuller, and her lips not *quite* so thin, and I think you'll have it.' So he turned the drawing over, and I had my poor, tired model, who was just going, sit down a minute, and he drew her face on the back, showing me where it would be better, and making me feel as though the world wasn't quite hollow, after all." I interrupt this letter both to say that Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes," with nine drawings by Abbey, was printed in *Harper's Magazine* for January,

1880, and to draw attention to the remarkable powers of quick observation which it indicates.

"While Henschel is playing at the grand piano at one side of the big studio, I take in the big mediæval fireplace at the other side, before which on the rug is a pretty lady with blonde hair and a black velvet dress, and another lady with a grey satin dress; they were embroidering some curtain stuff or other. On an ottoman in the middle of the floor are three dark girls in green, with lace collars; these have serious German faces, and are taking in Henschel's music with open mouth. . . . And by herself near the piano is a dark beauty, decidedly Spanish, with dead black hair, and a satin dress of a deep black blue. A few other faces over in a dark corner, and in the foreground a lovely old lady, with white hair and a lace cap. Everything is quiet, and soft and resty. Henschel surely never had a more appreciative audience. I turn around to Boughton when he had finished, and his eyes are full of tears. There is no applause, but the old lady goes up to Henschel and 'Thank you for that, my dear friend!' is the only thing he hears. It is quite hushed for a moment, and then the voices begin to hum a little. And I am introduced to Madame Moscheles, junior, the pretty blonde in black, and then they take me to the old lady, who is so like Coz. Jo that I want to jump at her. And she is Madame Moscheles, the intimate friend of Mendelssohn—think of that!

"I sit down and she begins a most animated conversation about America, and how much she would like to go there; 'But is it not too much for an old woman with five great-grandchildren?' She is glad the Americans are interested in her letters, and that they are such a musical people, and if her husband were alive it would gladden his heart to know how much they think of his dear friend, who is, alas! going out of fashion now in Europe. But he will live again after these modern noise-makers are dead and forgotten! The dear old soul goes on to tell me any quantity of interesting little things about Mendelssohn, and I must come and see a water-colour drawing of his own of the Bridge of Sighs. I am beginning to tell her of our 'Mendelssohn [Glee Club'] in New York, and how delighted

they would be to see her there, and how she would be received—not as a stranger, but almost as a mother—when Henschel begins playing again, and the buzz subsides. I am sitting where I can see his face now, and it is a study. He seems to just glory in what he is doing, and when he is finished they ask the dark lady to sing, and she does, and Boughton leans over to me to whisper 'This is what I came for.' He comes over with his chair and sits next me with his arm around my shoulder, and (if I could only have 'the pen of a ready writer' to tell you of this!) the dark lady sits down.

"Her olive face and black hair against the dull brown red of the wall behind, and if you close your eyes you can imagine the place. Some bright sunny Spanish courtyard with gaily dressed troubadours and Castilian beauties in yellow and black lace. I never heard any Spanish music like this. The face of the lady is a study. She must have been a great actress, and what a pity that Mr. Moncrieff (whoever he is) married her, and took Nina Gitana away from her own sunny land. It always seems wrong to me, this idea of despoiling an artistic country of its treasures. It doesn't seem right that the wonderful Elgin Marbles should be disturbed in their own native graves, or that Cleopatra's Needle should rear its delicate shaft on the borders of the bustling Thames, with the London fog and smoke to look up to instead of the blue skies of Egypt. I don't pretend to have a more delicate sense of the 'eternal fitness of things' than the wise and great people who look after the æsthetics of a nation, but what will there be to go to Greece or Rome or Egypt for, if they keep up this sort of thing? Think of the poor despoiled Poles crowding the railway station when the great Modjeska is leaving them, and crying 'Madame Helena, return to thy native land!' It will be a cosmopolitan world after a while, I suppose, and as ages roll on and nations intermingle, and the——" That letter, which here breaks off, is to me fairly conclusive proof that had Abbey chosen to become a writer instead of a draughtsman he would still have made a name.

Madame Moscheles was referring to the article in *Harper's Magazine* for February, 1879, in which a mass of her correspondence

with Mendelssohn was printed. The old lady, *née* Charlotte Embden, had married Ignaz Moscheles as long ago as 1826. Sir George Henschel, who remembers the evening well, says that Nita Gitana (the dark lady's real name), who married Mr. Moncrieff, was born in Spain but lived in London, where she sang professionally, chiefly in private houses.

On the next page of the letter — for these letters to his mother were written like serials, and posted at intervals of a week or so — we meet William Black and his wife, with whom the artist was to spend so many happy hours. The occasion was another of Boughton's dinner parties. Black is described as "a little man with black hair and big black moustache, a rather abstracted manner, and a slight Scotch accent, though he *didn't* ask me, 'And are you ferry well, whateffer?' I talked to him a little, and I thought him a queer sort of chap. He seemed to be thinking of something else. I didn't see much of him. Imagine my surprise when Boughton came in next evening and read me a note he had just received from Black asking my address, as he wanted to ask me down to Brighton for a couple of days." William Black at that time was thirty-seven, and one of the most popular of English novelists. He would be of special interest to Abbey through having already supplied *Harper's Magazine* with more than one serial. *Macleod of Dare* was, in fact, running at the moment. Later, Abbey was to illustrate his *Judith Shakespeare*.

The next evening Abbey met another compatriot artist, Whistler. Let him tell the story: "Looking over my drawings Boughton said, 'You've made a wonderful improvement in your work since you've been here, and if you are not very careful you'll do some good things by and by'—and then, 'Jimmy (Whistler) is going to dine with me to-night (when we give a dinner, we always give two, as the things are all there, and the men and everything). I'd ask you, but we've got fourteen coming, and you'll get sick if you eat too many dinners, but I want you to come in afterwards. Go up to the studio, and turn up the gas, and read if we've not finished dinner. Jimmy is sure to do or say something funny, and I'd like to have you meet him.' So I got into my swallow-tail—it takes an awful lot of shirts

to go out so much. At about ten I went in. Shortly afterwards they came up—the gentlemen—among them Rudolph Lehmann, Sidney Colvin, and W. S. Gilbert ("Bab"), Lewis, the lawyer, and a couple of 'Sirs.' Natorp, too—*and* Whistler. Queer-looking chap—short and very thin, with an immense head of black, curly hair, with right in front one perfectly white lock or curl, a black moustache and dab under his lower lip, one eyeglass, and no necktie. Perfectly good humoured and satisfied with a conceit that is colossal, so colossal that it is really delightful, and—*cheek!* They were begging Boughton to show his pictures, which were carefully curtained on the easels, and he, of course, wouldn't, when Whistler says, 'Oh, go ahead! Don't mind me!'

"I told him that he had a great many admirers in America, and mentioned a few of his pictures I had seen there—one in particular of a girl sitting in the sand; when 'Oh, yes; that *was* a good picture. You liked that? H-m—yes; that was an excellent picture—the girl very well drawn, indeed, as I remember it,' and so on. He showed me the farthing which he received as damages from Mr. Ruskin—he has it on his watch-chain. I can't, of course, remember or write here everything he said. I'm going down to see him soon, and hope to have something interesting to say about that." —Whistler in the spring of 1879 was forty-four, and was living in the White House, Tite Street, built for him by E. W. Godwin. The White House is exactly opposite Chelsea Lodge, which, many years later, Abbey was to buy as a London home, the house in which he worked and died. Whistler's lawsuit with Ruskin had been heard in 1878. The picture to which Abbey referred was probably one entitled "The Coast of Brittany." Thus we see Abbey meeting the men who were to be his friends, liking them, and being instantly liked. At Dr. Max Schlesinger's, a night or so after, another artist destined to be very closely associated with him until the very end came into his life. "A big man, as regards *voice* and *beard* (not stature), was talking in the library to an amused circle, as we entered. He was telling of a new Roman room he'd built, and was going to give a dinner in [at Townshend House, North Gate, Regent's Park].

'And you zhall be dere, Henschel—and my dear vriend Sir Henry Thompson, doo—and ve vill all vear dogas, and haf de real Roman schtyle.' This was Alma Tadema. . . . Henschel sang wonderfully, among other things Brahms's 'May Night.' Sitting at the piano, he turned half round and played his own accompaniment and sang away bits of things—Schumann's 'Grenadiers'—He uncrossed his legs and faced the piano to play that accompaniment and let his voice out to the full. I felt *quivers* 'way down in my boots. Boughton's eyes were full of tears after the 'May Night' song, and he pinched my arm so, that the marks remain there still. . . . I wish I had been a musician. To be able to hold the emotions of people in one's hand, to do what you will with, is a great thing indeed. I shall try to pick up some musical instrument before I come back."

Laurens (afterwards Sir Lawrence) Alma Tadema, famous as a painter of Roman and Greek life, who was to remain one of Abbey's closest friends, was then forty-three. A native of Holland, he never lost the Dutch accent, although he became very English in many ways. Tadema survived Abbey by only a year, dying in 1912. His house in the Grove End Road, where he lived the last twenty-five years of his life, was the resort of all who loved the best music.

Whistler again. "Boughton and I went down to see Whistler one afternoon, and I had a most interesting time. His house . . . it is queer on the inside. The front door is in the middle of the house, and you tumble downstairs when it is opened to you by his solemn-looking butler (who is a most attached servant, and will do anything for him, and is as well known as Whistler himself). You tumble down about six steps into a large low-ceiled room with pleasant casement windows looking out upon a neat little yard, over the back wall of which you see the trees in the park beyond [the gardens of Chelsea Hospital]. Here is matting on the floor, and many cosy chairs, and a big table, an alcove with a big fireplace; at the end a piano, and over it Whistler's great portrait of Irving as Philip II. On the wall are framed proofs of Whistler's etchings.

"The butler shows us up a narrow winding stair into the studio —an immense room with white walls, and one side all windows, like

a bare country church. At the other side a throne, with his lunch on a tray, and books and papers. At one end a battalion of easels and canvases, and an old mahogany candle stand which W. uses for a palette. At the other end is a printing press and a printer's table, with a mob of bottles, nitric acid, paper screen, and other paraphernalia of the etcher's art, and bending over a pile of binder's board is Whistler, who salutes us noisily through his nose, and spits out his eyeglass, which he has swallowed preparatory to polishing it upon his handkerchief. He has a funny, uncertain way of walking, acquired from wearing very tight boots. He is most kind, showing us proofs of etchings he has just finished—some very, very fine ones. There never have been finer etchings made at any time. He shows us a life-size portrait of a little dancing girl in tights doing a skipping-rope dance—'A Harmony in Yellow'; a large canvas of three nude girls, most exquisitely drawn, and charming in colour. I wish it could go to America; I think it would open the eyes of some of the Philistines there. They think he can't draw."—The "Dancing Girl" was, of course, Miss Connie Gilchrist. The large canvas was, I suppose, the "Three Figures" in pink and grey, now belonging to Mr. Alfred Chapman.

And there the home letters give out. Abbey, of course, continued to write; but these are all which, even in the form of copies, now exist.

CHAPTER XII

FIRST WORK IN LONDON

1879 Aged 26–27

Ways and Means—The National Gallery—Fred Walker—R. L. Stevenson and His Cousin—J. Comyns Carr—Dick Whittington—Augustus St. Gaudens—Westminster Abbey—Dean Stanley—A Hurried Tour in the Lakes—Moncure D. Conway—Burne-Jones—Thackeray's Daughter—Illness—*Scribner's* Rivalry with *Harper's*—An American Appreciation

THE loss of Abbey's further letters to his mother is not to be made good. Fortunately, however, he was at the same time writing regularly to Charles Parsons—although far less buoyantly, for money difficulties were increasing and were the cause of much anxiety and depression. Of these, being a good son, he wished his people to know nothing. One reason of impecuniosity in the early English days was that the artist was paid not per drawing but according to the size of the drawing when reproduced; and not knowing how its capacities would strike the art editor of the magazine, he was unable to forecast his earnings with accuracy. The excessive reduction of some of his work troubled him on another account. In one of his letters to Charles Parsons we find him writing: "It seems scarcely worth while to work a drawing up so highly as you have always impressed upon me you desired, and then make it so trifling in size that the detail is entirely lost. Do you think this is quite a fair shake?" And again: "I've about decided that I put in too much work. That hallway in the Manor House I took a great deal of pains with, especially with the carving on the cupboard at the right. This is all cut away—and rightly, too—for the cut is too small to show it." The drawing in question was one describing "A Moorland Village," reduced to $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $2\frac{1}{4}$ in., published June, 1880. The embarrassments resulting from the postal muddle did not clear up for many weeks, and Abbey had to borrow from Boughton, live with the utmost economy, and even walk all the way from Campden Hill to and from Fleet Street, where the offices of Messrs. Sampson, Low and Co., Harpers' London agents, were situated.

A TITIAN HEAD

Here are extracts from letters to Charles Parsons: "I spent a little while the other day in the National Gallery, and was tremendously overpowered by what I saw there; so much so that I began to have the headache and had to come away. I had no idea that the works of the great genii of times gone by would so impress me. I always supposed that I was unable to appreciate the great things. There is a head of Titian's there that goes away ahead of anything I ever thought paint could do, and a most wonderful collection of portraits of the Italian school, and of the works of the earlier Italians, and of the Dutchmen. Everything is confused and mixed as yet. I shall probably be able to write more coherently after a couple more of visits. The Turner collection is marvellous, and there are some wonderfully good portraits by Gainsborough. But the Titian 'knocked' me. . . .

"Whistler tells a funny story of Martin, who stayed with him when he was here, Martin banging on his door in the grey dawn, 'I say, Whistler! where do you keep your scissors that you trim your cuffs with ? '. . .

"There's a picture of Frederick Walker's at Agnews' Gallery, a water-colour—'The Harbour of Refuge' —an old poor-house garden with figures, one of the most exquisitely delicate and refined pictures that I know of, wonderful in colour and beautiful in drawing. . . ."

"I have been invited [March 10th] to exhibit at the 'Grosvenor,' which the men seem to think a great deal of here, and shall try to get a little water-colour done. The Secretary of the Gallery, Mr. J. Comyns Carr, is also the English editor of *L'Art*, and would like to have a little sketch of mine to reproduce in that periodical." —The selected drawing, published in the first number of *L'Art* for 1881, was that of "The 'Griffin' at Work," engraved by Mr. Timothy Cole, in the *Scribner* account of the Tile Club on Long Island. The article in which it appeared was by Comyns Carr on American wood engraving. O'Donovan's Tile Club relief of Abbey, engraved by Juengling, was also given.

A letter to Mr. Will H. Low in 1908, from which I have elsewhere

quoted, gives us a glimpse of R. A. M. Stevenson, cousin of R. L. S., and himself an artist and writer on art. "One of the first men I met here, and I can't think now how I came to know him, unless thro' Bob Arthur (what's become of Arthur?), was little 'Cally' Bloomer, and a cheery chap in face of dire misfortune he was. I went one dreary, snowy, slushy, foggy day to see him that winter, at a hole of a place he lived in, with two desperate studios in the back yard—Radnor Street, King's Road, Chelsea. (These studios have been to let for years.) There had just moved in that day a long-legged thin chap in a short coat, and a small black hat on the back of his head —Bob Stevenson—and he was taking out of boxes some of the most dismal sketches (of dismal snow scenery, in the forest near Barbizon) I have ever seen. The studio was the most awful place you can think of, in a nasty backyard, with a dripping spout and a large puddle under it. I remember that I wanted to lean my head against the wall and cry. After that I saw a good deal of Bob S. at the 'Café Monico,' and some time afterwards, it was, I think, he had Robert Louis with him. I don't know whether you ever knew that old place, a long high room with marble tables running the length of it, and red plush sofas to sit on. My feet never used to touch the floor, they were so high. But it is all torn down now and a new 'Monico' is there."—"Cally" Bloomer (so called from his native land of California) is a landscape painter, still (1919) living. Robert Arthur, who died in 1915, was best known as a painter of the Maine coast.

To Charles Parsons on April 27th, 1879: "My landlord [M. Ridley Corbet] having come back to his studio, I spent a week running around trying to find a place to work in, and Parsons very kindly offered me the use of his, as he is going to the country for a few months sketching soon." Abbey's chief tasks were drawings for Herrick, for "St. Agnes' Eve," and for a ballad of Dick Whittington. He had some difficulty with this poem, as we see from more than one letter which show their writer to us with all his conscientious thoroughness about him. Thus: "Whittington will be a good subject, though the ballad is an extremely ordinary one—quite poor in fact. I suppose Mr. Alden means the one called 'Sir Richard

Whittington's Advancement.' I know of no other." Then, in June: "You shall have all of the Whittington this week if I can get it off, which is doubtful, as the right boy has not yet turned up. I might use a man, but I can't get him into the costume, which is the same that Millais used in his 'Princes in the Tower,' which you must know pretty well by this time through the engravings." And, later: "I have a man down at the British Museum, tracing the original old ballad from the one in the Roxburghe folio. It is very quaintly set up, and will be very decorative on the page. It is a great thing to get permission to have this done, as the old Roxburghes are among their most precious possessions, and are kept along with a host of other priceless volumes of a like nature in a sort of 'Holy of Holies' they lock you into, and they watch you all the while you are there."

On May 29th Abbey went to Paris with Frank Millet for a short visit, of which we hear something in his letter to Charles Parsons of June 15th. The letter, however, is chiefly taken up with suggestions for strengthening the magazine, showing how closely Abbey had its interests at heart. Thus: "I should like to get a short story for Christmas by Henry James, junior. He is here, but he is such a bird of passage it's hard to put your finger on him. Frank Millet has two or three excellent short stories under consideration, if he will only write them. . . He goes to America in August, and you are to be very fond of him indeed, because he is such a thoroughly good fellow, and because he is a very dear friend of mine. I have been talking to Moncure Conway about going to Holland and tracing out our Dutch [New York] ancestors—in a way. This has never been done. I think several very interesting and novel papers might be made. This would not only interest the New Yorkers but also the New England public, and could be made interesting enough to interest everybody else. . . . Boughton would go with us for a while, and I could get some drawings from him, I am sure, which would be a valuable thing. I should think a paper on Jimmy Whistler would be of interest, with reproductions of his etchings, and some of his pictures, which would engrave admirably. People generally have a very vague idea of Whistler's work. . . . I consider *him* a very tremendous artist. Con-

way knows him and could write of him in a way, but the best man would be Comyns Carr, whose collected *Essays on Art* has just been published.

"By the way, I have been to Paris, and saw things that fairly paralysed—I can't spell that word—me. As sculptors the French are immense—I don't see why they are not as great as the greatest. As painters, they paint well, but *cui bono?* Their subjects are not worth the immense amount of clever painting they put into them. The Salon on the first day—varnishing day—was overwhelming. It seemed to me that I had never seen anything before worth looking at, but upon my third visit I had sifted out from the 3,000 pictures about half a dozen that really seemed fine. The large altar piece of Duez, 'The Potato Harvest' of Bastien Lepage, a woman sculling a boat, by Butin, and Bunce's Venetian scene—one of the finest skies I ever saw in paint. Bunce is an American, you know. A queer chap, at sword's point with nearly all the Latin Quarter sheep—on account of his outspoken honesty and contempt for men who blindly follow their masters—a shepherd's lead. I don't wish to abuse the students of the Latin Quarter, for they were very polite to me: they dined me at their 'Stomach Club,' and were very kind. St. Gaudens, Dubois, Bunce, Barnum, Butler, Brush, Anthony, Burnap, Harrison, Millet, Richard Whiteing, Henry Bacon, and several others were there. . . . I am going to try to get you a photograph or drawing of St. Gaudens's statue of Farragut, which is about complete, and which is to be placed in Madison Square, I believe. It is really a very fine work, and the arrangement is quite a novel and 'Tiley' one . . . a most successful attempt to make a statue planted firmly on both legs." Augustus St. Gaudens (or Saint-Gaudens as his name is sometimes printed), was just four years older than Abbey. Having been born in Dublin, the son of an Irish mother and a French father, he was at first even less American than we have seen Boughton to be. Taken across as an infant, he was almost lost on the voyage. At the age of twenty he went to Paris, and in 1870 to Rome. This statue of "Farragut," shown at the Paris Salon in 1880, established his fame. We shall often meet him as this narrative proceeds.

Two other pieces of news in the letter of June 15th are that Harry Harper, when he saw Abbey in London in May, dissuaded him from returning to America that year, saying that a longer stay in England was much better for him ; and that Abbey was about to leave for the Lake District with Conway.

To Anthony, the engraver, he writes at this time, with a suggestion or so for a large compositely illustrated Longfellow in which Boughton might share. "You should get Mark Fisher to do some of your pastoral subjects—cattle and things; he is a Boston man, and by long odds the best cattle and landscape man here. I don't think he draws on wood, but he draws beautifully on paper. . . . I saw Aldrich at Boughton's fancy ball, which was a superb affair, and most delightful to everyone except one poor young man who came in plate armour and couldn't walk upstairs. . . ."

Reference has been made to Abbey's drawings for the article on music in London. Another of them, dated July 23rd, 1879, represents the choir in Westminster Abbey. The artist little thought, as he sat there, that twenty years or so later he was to be in the same church making notes as the accredited historical painter of the Coronation of King Edward VII. Concerning the drawing of the choir he writes to Charles Parsons: "I most earnestly beg the favour of a little space at the foot of a column in the article, or in the personal column of the *Weekly*, to express my sense of the extreme courtesy I have received at the hands of the choir at Westminster Abbey. Yesterday, the master of the choir school stopped his school for *two hours, had the boys don their surplices and pose for me for that length of time* in the choir of the Abbey. . . . I suppose this act of courtesy is a sort of acknowledgment of the attention Dean Stanley received in America, but it was done in the most spontaneous and graceful way imaginable—almost as though they felt it a privilege to be allowed to stand for me. As I sat there in the quiet of that grand old place, of which no one can form any idea who has not seen it—with the row of pure bright little faces before me, a sense of the utter insignificance of worldly things as compared with those devoted to the adoration of the Most High came over me to such a degree as to

be oppressive, and when I had finished my sketch I found that my nerves and brain had been at such a tension that I was completely exhausted. All the greatest work I have seen here has been builded and fashioned in a spirit of religious devotion—the greatest pictures, the greatest sculpture, and the greatest architecture. One cannot wonder at the simpler-minded people of former ages falling down in worship before the statues of the great Greeks. As you walk through the aisles of the great abbey there is the same sense of awe that one feels in the presence of the tremendous, simply grand Venus of Milo in the Louvre. . . .

"In an old musty loft of the Abbey we were shown as a great favour the old wax effigies of the Kings and Queens of England, the existence of which is only known to a very few people. These effigies were formerly carried at the funeral processions of their originals, and were supposed by many to be in reality the bodies of the deceased. They are not, as you imagine, clumsy, inartistic affairs, but are really works of art, the faces being modelled from casts taken from the original after death. And they are *clothed in the original costumes worn by the originals in life*. There is Queen Elizabeth standing erect and haughty in her robes of state, with crown and sceptre: such an awful lesson of the decay of earthly grandeur—her hard merciless face, with pearls and diamonds encircling the withered neck, and the immense ruff, wilted and covered with the dust of centuries. The gorgeous satin robe embroidered with silver and covered with cobwebs. There is Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, in his ermine cape and gorgeous brocade dress, his coronet, and beautiful lace cuffs and frills, silk stockings, etc. William and Mary, Queen Anne, Charles II., in a crimson coat and black velvet hat. The Duchess of Buckingham and her little boy, and a row of boxes containing fragments of decayed royal images of hundreds of previous years, which have fallen to pieces. And—among other odds and ends—a deal box containing the bones of Major John André! Now, this has never been *touched* as far as I can discover, in any way by an artist; and Mr. Lillie is writing the thing up as hard as he can for fear someone will get ahead of us; and after I

come from the Lakes, unless I have heard to the contrary from you, I shall go down there, use every nerve to get permission to make careful studies of these things for a magazine article, the originality of which this earth will never have beheld before."

The drawings for the article on the wax figures were subsequently relinquished by Abbey. Returning to the matter, in a later letter to Charles Parsons, he says: "Apropos of the 'Effigies,' the Lillies and I were invited to lunch by Dean Stanley at the Deanery in Westminster Abbey—and such a delightful old place! Imagine *living* in Westminster Abbey! You enter a little low doorway under an archway out of the Close, and are ushered into a large square hall with a bright blazing fire—very cheery looking, after coming, as we did, through several miles of foggy, snowy streets. There is a quaint, square old staircase, ornamented by some portraits and a large relief—one of the Elgin Marbles (Lady Augusta Stanley was daughter of the Earl of Elgin). Then we were shown to a great drawing-room with three large windows looking out upon the Close, and a charming old lady came forward to meet us, the late Lady A.'s sister, Lady Frances Bailey. After a while the Dean came in. He is a delightful little old chap, and made us very welcome. Then we went in to lunch and were waited upon by (I have strong reasons for believing) theological students in disguise. The butler I'm *sure* was a retired clergyman who had lost his voice or something. The dining-room was most picturesque, with portraits of former Deans in wigs of their various periods—lining the walls, and a great big mullioned window looking out on the cloisters. We had a merry luncheon, and afterwards we were taken by the Dean through a long low passage, where there was a little door which he unlocked, and we were in the Nave of the Abbey.

"We had the most interesting time you can imagine. The Dean spent, I should think, nearly two hours with us, explaining and pointing out all sorts of interesting things, and finally he took us into the loft where the effigies are, and was really very eloquent. If I could have done shorthand, the articles would have been all ready. Then it was time for service, and we were shown into the Dean's pew, and

as the darkness began to creep up the walls the choir in their white surplices came chanting in, and the evening service began. And we came out of the wonderful place after it was all over, and while the last notes of the great organ were echoing through the place, feeling that this really had been a red-letter day. It is a feeble thing to write a thin description of a place like Westminster. I never was in a place in my life that so affected me. The Dean has given me the most cordial permission to sketch anything and everything that I like about the Abbey, and as soon as the weather is anyway half respectable, I shall go to work there."

In a letter to Charles Parsons, written at the Salutation Inn, Ambleside, on August 4th, 1879, something is said of the Lakeland tour: "Conway went away on Saturday night after having been here with me for six days, and the way we skimmed over this country was a caution.... I've made about sixteen very superficial sort of sketches. They cover a lot of ground, and it cost a lot of money to get 'em, but I do hate to spoil a good subject by hurrying through it.... It is provoking just as you have become interested in a nice subject to have a man look over your shoulder and say, 'Dear me, that is the most finished sketch I ever saw. Don't waste any more time on that; we've got to get to Borrowdale before lunch, and you'll have to make a sketch there, and we *must* get back to Keswick in time to catch the 7.15 train or we won't get to Penrith to-night.' Finally the expedition resolved itself into a sort of lightning express . . so that I decided to stay up here a week or so longer and to go all over the interesting part of the ground again." Moncure Daniel Conway, the Unitarian minister, who died in Paris in 1907, and is chiefly known by his Life of Tom Paine, was at that time fifty-seven years of age, and was being very useful to *Harper's Magazine*. The Wordsworth article was published in December, 1880, and January and February, 1881, with illustrations by Abbey, and also by Alfred Parsons, who had made them either from Abbey's notes or from photographs. In Conway's narrative his companion figures as "The Abbé," but there is nothing characteristic told of him.

The letter continuing, we find another reference to Mrs. Lillie,

who was an American writer settled in London performing "farmer's pony" tasks for *Harper's Magazine*. This she did for some years, working up this subject and that, according to editorial instructions, both in England and on the Continent. In 1883 a little book of children's stories written by her was issued from Franklin Square, under the title *Mildred's Bargain*, in which were a few early drawings by Abbey. "Mrs. Lillie [he says] and I want to do an article on Surrey; there is some beautiful stuff there. Anything you send Mrs. Lillie to do, you can rest assured, will be as complete as it is possible to make it."

The letter of August 4th also contains this survey of English art at that moment: "You asked me several letters ago whether there were any signs here of a new birth—in art. I find, and tell myself over and over again that every man has to be *himself*—but what a hard thing that is to be! About fifteen or twenty years ago, there was a decided new birth here, when Leighton was first beginning to make a noise, and Poynter was looming up, and George Mason and Fred Walker and Pinwell and Keene and du Maurier were astonishing the slow-pokes. Now Poynter and Leighton have either ceased to loom in the one instance or have loomed all they are going to. Du Maurier has reached his top rung; so has Keene—and the other three are dead, poor Walker of pure nervous exhaustion . . . Mason's body was too weak to support the nervous strain. Since that time they either copy Walker flatly (there are about fifty, without exaggeration, pure and simple copyists of Walker here) or Burne-Jones.

"Burne-Jones is a great man. There are great heights in some of his things—his drawing is at times very exquisite, and there is a simplicity and purity about his types that his imitators simply fail utterly to reproduce. Imitators usually choose the vulgar in a man's work. The young men here are Frank Holl, Lionel Smythe, and Gregory. . . . There is a quiet, modest young fellow here named E. R. Hughes, who is trying hard to do the best according to his light."

The next letter to Charles Parsons, on August 24th, is chiefly concerned with magazine matters. It says, among other things,

that Abbey and the Lillies are about to start in search of a typical English village to describe with pen and pencil. I find this sentence: "Nothing can ever make me believe that a good thing can't be made just as popular as a bad one." On September 12th he writes again, from Newton Abbot, in Devonshire, the village that was selected, the article appearing in the magazine for June, 1880, with some of his happiest *plein-air* drawings. The letter declines a suggestion from Mr. Alden that Abbey should collaborate with Boughton in the writing of the book on Holland which they were contemplating ("I think the cobbler had better stick to his last"), and it says also that he and the Lillies were taking a furnished house together for three months, in Auriol Road, W. Kensington, where the next letter, on November 5th, was written. One or two passages are interesting. This, for example, states his solicitude for his family, who were still none too prosperous. "I wish I could make an arrangement with you to send my people at home a regular sum every week—say 35 dollars—until my engagement is up; but I suppose this would be too much trouble. And then, would you please send 150 dollars now. I don't know whether you have my father's address—231 S. 39th Street." Abbey goes on to speak of work, and uses this odd phrase, "I don't know whether you want me after the middle of next month —December"; which suggests that his arrangement with Harper's was by no means the rigid affair that most people must have thought it. He adds, "I should like to draw for *Punch* and the *Graphic*, but have said no word to them yet. Although I have several times been 'approached' I have invariably declined to talk business." And we know also that the late R. W. Gilder, who was in London on a visit and had dined at Auriol Road, had thrown out hints that if Abbey joined *Scribner's*, of which he was then editor, he would not regret it. But very wisely the Harpers frustrated these schemes, and Abbey remained as an illustrator exclusively in their employment.

The next letter tells of ill-health. It was written from 10 Auriol Road on November 30th, and attributes a general weakness to overwork, the relaxing air of Devonshire and the new house's drains. "At dinner the other night at Mr. Simpson's—a Q.C., whom the Lillies

have introduced me to—I met Baron de Bunsen, Signor Garcia, old Dicky Doyle, and Mr. and Mrs. Ritchie [Miss Thackeray]. A most interesting party. Canon Vaughan of the Temple was there, too. I had a long talk with Mrs. Ritchie. . . . She is a lovely woman, and full of the most interesting reminiscences. If one could only get her to write some of it down! I have been since to her house in Young Street to tea—and it *is* an interesting place. There is a low white panelled drawing-room with sketches by Leighton, Wilkie, C. R. Leslie, Fred Walker, Doyle, Wm. Hunt, Severn, Geo. Mason, etc. Old furniture, old china, old rugs, 'and foolish old odds and foolish old ends.' Best of all the exquisite MS. copy of *The Rose and the Ring*, written for them by their father, when Miss Thackeray and her sisters were ill of scarlet fever. The illustrations are really very delicate and beautiful, in pen and a slight wash of colour, and all the chapter heads and initials are in red. Think of the pains the old gentleman took with them! Mrs. Ritchie told me she would rather write for *Harper's* than anyone, and but that she is expressly forbidden to write *at all* at present, she would set to work at once, as she knows exactly what I want. I'm spinning a long yarn. Don't let any 'personal' man get hold of what I've said. If you *do*, my little jig is up over here, and I'll have to go back home. There's nothing English people hate as they do an American 'personal' writer, and the mischief of it is they think we *all* are secret reporters—until they find out better. . . .

"Carr is going to write a series of articles for *Scribner's*, entitled 'The Present Tendencies of English Art,' to be published afterwards in book form. Boughton and Tadema are *mine*, however, and Gilder has promised to do the handsome thing—and not 'run' me. . . . We are all thinking of going to Canterbury to spend 'Christmas in a Cathedral town,' the Lillies and the Gilders and I."—Signor Garcia was the brother of Malibran, and himself a teacher of singing who lived to be over a hundred and died in 1906. Dicky Doyle was the *Punch* artist, who died in 1883. He was at that time fifty-three.

The next letter—December 16th—tells of the failure of Abbey's plan to take a holiday and thereby be healed: "I have been very ill—

to-day is the first that I have been up for nearly a week. Everybody has been so very kind that I couldn't help getting better. I caught a severe cold, which settled upon my digestive organs and produced the most acute pain I ever suffered. I am still pretty weak, or I would write you a longer letter. . . . I don't think I care about tying myself for another whole year upon the present terms. I'll wait until I've caught up a little. If you will kindly send to my people—231 S. 39th Street, Philadelphia, the 35 dols. per week I shall be very grateful. I hope to get to work before very long. I am tired of this idleness."

On the next day he writes again: "I am feeling better to-day, and am getting stronger, I know, and I shall shortly be able to get to work again. It is dull work, and unprofitable, this lying in bed all day looking out into the nine sections of grey sky squared off for my especial delectation by the window sash. To be sure, upon one more than usually pleasant (?) day, a red ball made its appearance at one side of the window, and remained visible for an hour or so, when it disappeared at the other. I understood later in the day that this was the sun. It was so long since I had seen it that I didn't recognise it. . . . Alfred Parsons came to see me this afternoon, and brought me a couple of water-colours he would like to exhibit at our Water Colour Exhibition. . . . I told him to seal them and send them to you . . . and that I would write you about them. . . . Parsons has been most kind to me, and since I have been so ill has come every day and brought me grapes and jelly and things and has suffocated himself in the close air of a sick room to read to me by the hour. . . . Everybody has been more than kind."

"December 18th, 1879. In the dearth of good engravers don't you think it well to use some of the processes more? I think my pen drawing of the cat jumping off the table would have been far better, processed, and so would the last one of the 'Whittington' series. I was much disappointed with a great many of the proofs you sent. The *faces* in almost every instance had suffered, especially the one of Madeline leaning against the bed. The face here was just *vile*. She looks as though she were thinking of all the wicked things she could conceive of, and her nose is dirty, and her hair is all

matted on her forehead, etc., etc. The rest of the engraving is exquisite; all is good—except the flesh. It seems to me a pity not to take more pains with the most important part of a drawing instead of elaborating the borders so much . . . and the way T. engraved the foot of the old 'beadsman' was frightful. His ankle is about an eighth of an inch too wide. I'm sorry you don't send me proofs to look at as soon as they are sent in. I think I ought to be allowed to correct some of the things.

"December 21st. I've had a little relapse; I was better, and Alfred Parsons came to stop two days while the Lillies went away to see some friends in the country. I did some imprudent thing or other and caught a little more cold, and was lying in bed feeling blue enough, when P. came up and brought me the Harpers' most generous Christmas present with the accompanying highly-prized note. I cannot tell you how much appreciated it all was—most especially the note, which made me feel better than I have felt for weeks. I don't know what I have done to deserve all this. I had begun to feel during the past few months as though I were losing ground, that maybe—like Frank Smith's old donkey—'I was a-passin' myself off fo' corn when I'se nuffin' but shucks.' If I have in any way been of service to the Harpers I am very glad, and they may be very sure that I shall leave nothing undone here that I can see would further their interests. . . . Scribners have secured Vierge of the *Monde Illustré*—and later of the *Vie Moderne*—for their 'Peter the Great.' He's a ripper, and we'll have to look out for squalls."

Before leaving 1879, which at its close found Abbey still in bed, I should like to say that in *Harper's Magazine* for February was printed an article on the condition of American art at that day and its tendencies, in which many of Abbey's Tile Club friends were represented by reproductions of their work and from which an excellent idea can be obtained of the quickening in American painting that had set in. The article closed with a very appreciative reference to Abbey: "It is difficult, among a number who are all brilliant and gifted, to assign to each his proper rank, but it will generally be conceded, we think, that the artist who shows most

original inventive power, scarcely equalled by any other artist we have produced, is Mr. E. A. Abbey. It must be taken into consideration that he is still very young, that he now for the first time visits the studios and galleries of Europe, that his advantages for a regular art education have been very moderate, and that he is practically self-educated. And then compare with these disadvantages the amount and quality of the work he has turned out, and we find represented in him genius of a high order, combining almost inexhaustible creativeness, clearness and vividness of conception, a versatile fancy, a certain quaint, delicate humour, a poetic perception of beauty, and admirable chiaroscuro, drawing, and composition."

CHAPTER XIII

ILL HEALTH AND HARD WORK

1880–1881 Aged 27–29

Convalescence and Misgivings—Art in America—Mrs. Cameron, the Photographer—Death of Abbey's Mother—The Pains of Conscience—Bastien Lepage's "Joan of Arc"—C. S. Reinhart—The Paris Ateliers—A River Holiday—*A Castle in Spain*—In Holland with Boughton—Henry Irving and Ellen Terry—Munich—G. J. Pinwell—Lechlade—In the Highlands with Black

THE first letter of 1880 was to Charles Parsons, begun on January 17th: "I just write you a line to let you see that I am sitting up (though I haven't been dressed yet) and to tell you that I hope shortly to be well enough to get to work again. I believe I have been very ill—so I'm told—and I certainly feel weak enough to believe I have been through anything. They say I must take six weeks' vacation at least, which is all very well, but hardly practicable. Just as soon as I can get at it, I will finish up the behind-hand work. Though it may not seem to you that I send you a great deal of work, don't infer, please, that I am in the habit of doing nothing. The constant struggle to 'get ahead' and to do it a 'little better this time' is in itself retarding to anything like speed. . . .

"It is utterly impossible to do good work straight off, I find. All this 'impressionist' business is well enough in its way, and as far as it goes. *I* like to feel in a man's work that it has hurt him a little, given him a wakeful night or two, and a little headache. The great trouble, it seems to me, at home is that the main idea is 'paint,' no matter what the subject be, so that it be 'nattily' painted. I must say with all my heart that I believe this to be debasing to art, as *art*. Paint as well as you please, but do *say* something. The more I find out, the more there seems to be to find. . . .

"January 18th.—It's very weary work, this convalescencing business, but everybody is so *very* kind. Mr. Lillie is worn out sitting up with me at night. He sat up every night with me for two weeks. Last night the telegram came from Harpers' to 'take vacation.' I

cannot tell you how grateful I am to them for this kindness. I am not quite up to writing them a letter now, but will you convey to them the expression of my sincere thanks. . . ."

On February 17th Abbey wrote to Charles Parsons that he was about to start for Biarritz with the Lillies. Referring to the water-colour exhibition in New York, which he hears was a good one, he says: "It seems to me that small, strong, earnest bodies of *live* men, working together and using each other's experience, as the Tile Club does, cannot help but become a strong power and influence for good. I never seemed to work so easily and surely as I did when I was with the boys on Long Island [in 1878], and I feel greatly the lack of the same congenial companionship here. I suppose, though, that isolation to a certain extent tends to make one self-reliant. I long to be at work again, but my doctor looks very serious, and becomes violently obstructive whenever I express myself thus to him. Sometimes it seems as though I *must* do something. My head gets so full of unexpressed ideas and arrangements and combinations that it seems as though it would burst sometimes. I am looking forward anxiously to the time when I will have acquired enough technical facility to enable me to *do* some of these things—*right*. I am greatly encouraged by the criticisms and advice of the few men I go to see here —Boughton and Sir Frederic Leighton and Tadema and Parsons. Leighton takes the greatest pains to explain anything one is misty about in the way of *method*, and is just as much 'one of us' as though he was still an Academy student."

The letter continues: "I think I had better give up the rest of De Mille's story [*A Castle in Spain*], if you must have it by the first of July. . . . I am anxious to get at and finish a number of the Herrick things before the end of the year. I have half a dozen or so on the stocks, and these with Miss Veley's things and the other work I have —the Holland, the Effigies, the Thames, Surrey, and a number of other things—will keep me busy for some time. I dread to do the Tower. There are quantities of men who could do it better than I can; it consists mainly of a series of rooms with show cases in them. There are many other rooms doubtless that I haven't seen. . . . I

shall not try to illustrate much of the 'intense' modern school of English poetry, of which this is an extract :

The Lady leaned from her lattice
Low as the land leaned she. . . .

which is very alliterative and rhythmic, but hardly illustratable. I cannot conceive any other form for it than this. This must have been

her little game. I can only think the lady must have been exceedingly uncomfortable. . . .

"I am sure that the coming ten years will place American art on an equal footing with that of any other country. In some respects it will surpass that of a good many countries. The main difficulty in the way seems to be the lack of pictures to 'key up to.' There are many good pictures in America—one of the best Rubens I have seen is in Wilksbarre, and there is a stunning Velasquez in the N.Y Historical Society—but these things are inaccessible to the mass of painters, and ignorance always breeds indifference, so that few avail themselves of even the few opportunities there are for seeing good things."—Thanks to the wealth and enterprise of

American collectors and the willingness of English owners (even when they are National Gallery trustees) to sell, America has now some of the finest pictures in the world, both in public galleries and private collections. The Metropolitan Museum of New York could not to-day be disregarded by any conscientious student of art.

The next letter is from Biarritz on March 30th. Owing to anxiety on receipt of a cablegram about his mother's illness and his inability to get to her, Abbey had had a relapse. "Dr. Roberts forbids me utterly to cross the Atlantic just yet, and really I do not feel up to it. Later letters and telegrams have relieved my mind as to my mother's immediate danger, but I believe one never quite recovers from Bright's disease, so I am trying to be patient and look things squarely in the face. I think you never saw her? No one ever comprehended my slightest impulses or whim more completely, and all through what you can easily imagine to have been a most troublesome boyhood she was ever patient and lovingly forbearing. I have taken to her dear ear the very innermost of my thoughts, good and bad, and have never found else than the most tender large-hearted sympathy. We are all in all to each other, and it will not be difficult for you to comprehend how the severe illness of the one being to whom I owe all that is highest and best in my nature fills me with such deep grief. . . ."

Writing on April 21st to Mr. Alden, Abbey says that he is better, but still far from well, that he cannot walk much yet, but hopes to begin work again in a couple of weeks or so. He gives a long list of tasks on which he is to be busy directly the hour strikes. This is interesting: "The house in Miss Thackeray's *From an Island* (you remember the story), always had a great charm for me, and one day I asked her about it. It is a *real* place—as I find nearly all her backgrounds are—and is (or was) the house of Mr. and Mrs. Cameron, on the Isle of Wight. Mrs. Cameron is the lady who made the wonderful photographs some years ago of Carlyle, Tennyson, and of various groups of costumed children—you have probably seen some of them. Mr. C. and Mrs. C. are both dead now and their beautiful home is broken up. Mrs. Ritchie has a very good sketch

"TO MEDDOWES."

"SELECTIONS FROM HERRICK."

To Meddowes

Ye have bin fresh and green
  Ye have bin fill'd with flowers
And ye the walks have bin
  where maids have spent their hours

You have beheld how they
  With wicker arks did come
To kisse and bear away
  The richer cowslips home

You have heard them sweetly sing.
  And seen them in a round
Each virgin, like a spring,
  With hony suckles crown'd

But now, we see, none here,
  Whose silv'ry feet did tread,
And with dishevell'd haire,
  Adorn'd this smother mead

Like vnthrifts, having spent
  Your stock, and needy growne
Yee are faine for to lament
  Your poure estates, alone

of it by Arthur Severn, hanging up over her back drawing-room chimney piece, and she pointed out to me where they had added on here and there and everywhere as they felt disposed. A friend, a lady who had been ill, was asked to visit them, and as she needed sun they thought the windows in the room she was to have were too small, so they had a long window built into it. One of the young ladies was engaged to be married and had no place to be courted in, so they built a quaint little veranda in one corner out of the way where they billed and coo'd to their hearts' content. Mr. C., who was an invalid many years, looking from the dining-room window one evening, regretted that the kitchen garden, which lay in front of it, was not a lawn. That night, after he had retired, Mrs. Cameron had a little army of workmen come and they completed a beautiful lawn for him by next morning's breakfast time. All this was very charming, I thought. Mrs. Ritchie said the neighbours, who were steady-going philistines, thought they were crazy people, but that it was the most delightful house she had ever visited, nevertheless.

"My description is rather bald, or a 'catalogue of things,' as Aldrich said of Walt Whitman's poetry. If you had heard it described by Mrs. Ritchie you would have had a better idea of the place. I wish we had places of this sort in America. I hope we will have one of these days. Tennyson lived half a mile away and used to wander in and out of this house at his own sweet will. We couldn't have this, but we might have some other fellow who would be quite as agreeable.

"April 28th.—I have very sad news every day now from home and am expecting daily the tidings of my poor dear mother's departure from this world. This is the greatest grief that I have ever known; who could know a greater? I try to be philosophical about it and to rise above it all, but it is dreary work."—Mrs. Abbey died on April 15th, aged fifty-four.

Writing from 10 Auriol Road on May 31st, Abbey was angry with some remarks on painting and engraving which G. W. Curtis had been making in the magazine for February. "Perhaps Mr. Curtis is not aware that one at *least* of his draughtsmen for the engravers takes as much pains with the details of a drawing which appears in

his magazine—an inch and a half square in size—as ever any painter did with his most elaborate pictures. . . . I could tell you how 'Julia's Clothes' [in the Herrick series] cost me a week of search among costumes and historical authorities, and how, failing to find what I wanted, I had her dress *made* of black satin from an old print of the time by Hollar at an expense of more than half of what I received for the drawing. A case in point is found in the very batch of drawings which I send with this letter. I had finished an elaborate drawing of 'Mindwell and his Mother,' when I discovered that I had made the costume at least twenty years later than the date Mrs. Cooke has set down as that of her story, and although she distinctly describes one of her characters as wearing a costume which was not thought of until *thirty* years at least after her date—*still*, I threw mine out and lost all that work. . . .

"I could not begin to tell you of the worry I had with the 'St. Agnes Eve' illustrations in this respect. I had to have some things made; others I borrowed of Boughton and hired of Barthe [the costumier]. My maxim in all my work is that if it is worth doing at all, it is worth doing as well as it is possible to do it—in every *minutest* respect. A man who allows himself the habit of being slipshod about little things, will gradually become slipshod about everything. If an illustrator is to show the manner and appearances of the people of the Middle Ages, it seems to me it should fairly *smell* of that time. I am picking up piece by piece a very valuable collection of accessories. I must have at least fifty complete costumes of various periods, mainly of the last two hundred and fifty years. These are nearly all original articles, or are carefully copied from originals which I have borrowed for the purpose."

Alfred Parsons had met Abbey in Paris on May 12th, whence they returned together on the 19th. Continuing his letter, Abbey thus describes their visit: "I have been profoundly stirred by my sight of the pictures in Paris during my late little visit there. I must have just been in the mood for it—or something. I couldn't get away from the awful Venus of Milo in the Louvre—mooned away a whole morning there with Alfred Parsons. Lord! how I would have wor-

shipped her if I'd been an old Pagan. And then the Titians upstairs, the immortal 'Homme au Gant,' the great Venetian things, by men whose very names have passed away and are unknown to us. . . . There is in the Salon this year the very greatest picture ever painted by anybody since the fifteenth century, a picture before which stand crowds of reverent people every day, too full of the sentiment of the picture to speak of it. This is Bastien Lepage's wonderful 'Joan of Arc.' It is a life-sized figure of a coarsely and vulgarly moulded peasant girl, who has in her eyes the vision of the possibilities of her future. She is turning her radiant face away from the vision which appears just over her flax wheel—a vision faintly seen through the trees, of a knight in golden armour holding out to her, in both his hands, a sword. Behind him appear two figures in bride wreaths and veils. There is no forcing of effect. The scene is a homely, weed-grown orchard, and the vision is only faintly seen. The girl is dressed in a rough dress of grey and brown, the light is perfectly diffused throughout, as it would be out of doors, yet your eyes cannot get away from the girl's face. You don't see any paint or any brush marks —there the *real* girl just stands . . . everything looks cheap and commonplace and feeble beside this wonderful masterpiece. I never had anything so stir me up in my life. . . . If I could half express to you the wild longing within me to grab a brush and set my teeth and paint until I *dropped dead*, this pen would get *red hot*. I haven't said anything in this of the crushing trouble that has come to me, simply because I don't dare to let myself think of it. When I get stronger I shall write to you of my darling mother."

Again, to Reinhart, on June 3rd: "The reason the Salon looks so mean is because Lepage so utterly swamps and bangs the lot. But they are nowhere in comparison. I think 'Joan' the greatest picture of this age—those I have seen—and pretty nearly the greatest—*i.e.*, the most emotional—of any other."

A year later Abbey returned to this painting, which had gone to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, where it now hangs. "It is [he again assures Charles Parsons] by all odds the greatest modern picture I have ever seen. The face is very great work—inspiration, if

you like—tremendous art anyway. It affected me much as the great Venus in the Louvre does. I have seen a great many heads painted by a great many men, but I never saw a face that stirred me up as this of Bastien Lepage's does. The old Masters never beat it. . . . You have no idea how paltry it made everything else in the room appear, and how mean all the rest of the pictures in the Exhibition looked after it. Bouguereau, Bonnat, Carolus-Duran, Lefebvre, even Jules Breton were all hung in the same room, unfortunately for them. There was a Vollon there—a big golden pumpkin and a battered black pot with a brass inside to it—the only other picture in the room which held its own."

Reinhart came to Europe with his family this year and settled in Paris. From a letter to him we gather that Abbey, too, had a serious Paris sojourn in prospect. The date is June 8th, 1880: "I have about decided to try Paris next winter, if I get a wholesome place to work in. I want to study painting, and, do you know, I have come to the conclusion that Julien's school is about my dot; Dagnan Bouveret works there. Didn't you think his 'Accident' very fine? I'd like to study with him if I could get at him; he is very young, I believe. There's Cazin—I thought he painted about as well as I could ever hope to; Bastien Lepage has too decided a method perhaps, and then I don't believe he would take anybody. [Alfred] Parsons wants to go and have a while with Pelouse. All the old men seem to be falling off, except Jules Goupil. This putting men in dark caves and throwing electric light on them gets stale after 500 times. I suppose you have seen the Ribots at the office of *L'Art* and have decided that that sort of thing gets monotonous also. I liked Jules Goupil's 'Last Hours of Madame Quelquechose'—whatever her name is; good, honest, straightforward painting I thought it, *and* Vollon. If I could get all that out of pumpkin and dipper I think I'd go in for them. Bonnat is too tricky. Dagnan seemed to me to have fewer tricks perhaps than any of them. *His way* seemed to be to paint what he had to paint with as little fuss as was compatible with making what he painted look like what he was painting it from. Think this over—it is a little involved, but it is what I mean."

Abbey's ambition to study in Paris was, however, never fulfilled, although from time to time during his career he revived the project of living there, at any rate, for a year; and there seems to be a widespread impression that, like so many Americans, he had learned his painting there. Writing to Mr. Will H. Low as late as 1908, he said: "I never have been very much in Paris – never for more than a fortnight at a time, I think – and for the first time in the spring of 1879, after you had gone away, and after the Latin Quarter days of most of the men who were my friends were over. . . . But the things I had to do were English and kept me in England."

The letter to Reinhart continues: "Poor Boughton looks badly—he is far from well. I spent yesterday afternoon with him, and he was interested to know you were coming here soon. If you don't love him when you know him you don't deserve to know him. But you will. . . . We went out to Hammersmith yesterday and explored a *bric à brac* place, and planned to go up to Cookham on the river for a day soon and have a square loaf. F. Walker is buried at Cookham, you know. I wish you would come over here and go along with us. I've just about finished five Herrick pages. I wish you could see them before they go; two of them are much better than anything I've done, I think."

The summer of 1880 was spent chiefly in London at Auriol Road, but two or three weeks were given to Alfred Parsons at Frome. Afterwards Abbey and Alfred Parsons went to Oxford, where they were joined by Abbey's cousin Charles Truslow, all three rowing from Oxford to London and the two artists making sketches. Mrs. Lillie having gone abroad to visit her mother in Italy, Abbey and Mr. Lillie took a furnished house, No. 72 Bedford Gardens, with a studio attached, for a few months. A letter to Charles Parsons, on September 2nd, states that Abbey and Boughton were to start on a sketching and writing tour on October 1st, that he had done much work and was very tired of illustrating the novel, *A Castle in Spain*, and that money difficulties were harassing him. The trouble again proceeded from the custom of paying not for each drawing used, but according to the size of its reproduction. Could

there not, he asks, be a new arrangement? It is doubtful if he was extravagant or foolish; but he had taken up the most expensive branch of art and he was dominated by a passion for thoroughness which could never lead towards economy. As for *A Castle in Spain*, this was a novel by James De Mille for which Abbey had been making drawings ever since 1878, to be engraved by the regular wood-cutting staff. It ran through the magazine in 1883 and was afterwards republished in volume form with the illustrations. Abbey writes of it, in his letter of September 2nd: "I am getting on with that bugbear of mine—the *Castle in Spain*. I'm thinning the illustrations out a good deal towards the end. I wish I could have had Hardy's story [*A Laodicean*]. Du Maurier has not done himself very proud on the illustrations to it, and the engraving has not been very much better. I don't think du M. is the man to do that sort of thing—it is completely out of his line, as much as, or even more so than, this awful *Castle* is out of mine, and it is difficult to take an interest in a thing with which one is not in sympathy—and when one is not in sympathy one is *very* heavily handicapped. When du Maurier illustrates a story like that of Hardy's he is merely absurd. It is a pity Small didn't have it to do. You have no idea how beautiful Small's drawings on the wood are. With our cutting they would be a different thing altogether from the sort of thing Swain turns out. These English engravers are good on large work, but play the mischief with delicate things."—Abbey never tired of extolling Small's work, and to find him thus recommending that draughtsman for work which he, himself, would like to do is another proof of his want of any tinge of jealousy.

The next letter, on September 26th, also to Charles Parsons, indicates that Abbey was by no means yet strong again. It suggests, too, that he was overworking—a tendency with him all his life, and unavoidable where there was such a union of energy, ambition, and experimentalism. Concerning, for example, the Herrick illustrations, which were his staple task at this time, he says: "It is impossible, as you suggest, to finish things up as they *ought* to be done, right *slap*. It takes a long time sometimes to get hold of one little seemingly

CORINNA'S GOING A MAYING.

1. "COME, MY CORINNA, COME, LET'S GO A MAYING."

2. "THERE'S NOT A BUDDING BOY OR GIRLE, THIS DAY,
BUT IS GOT UP, AND GONE TO BRING IN MAY."

ROBERT HERRICK.

unimportant detail, which isn't noticed after it is put in, but would be if it weren't there. . . . I have made *four* attempts at the 'Night Piece to Julia,' and am finally getting it into shape. I suppose the first one would have been just as 'popular' as the last one will be, but I don't see how one is ever going to get anywhere if one is satisfied with a popularity based on no more substantial foundation than mere ignorance."

The Dutch tour with Boughton came off in October. Writing to Charles Parsons on October 20th from the Hotel Bellevue at The Hague, Abbey says: "Boughton and I have got hold of some capital stuff—*really*. We lost about a week going to places we didn't care to look at after we got to 'em. The Friesland part was most uninteresting, but in North Holland—at Hoorn, Edam, Monnickendam, Alkmaar, Vollendam, and Marken, we found *quantities* of stuff, just lying about loose. At Amsterdam we saw Rembrandt's great pictures —the portrait of Burgomaster Six, the *greatest* of all of 'em. No one has seen the Dutch school at its best who has not seen the great Six collection. How much greater a man he was than his duller-witted fellow-citizens who are now utterly forgotten!"

The next letter, written from his new home at 72 Bedford Gardens, on November 6th, refers to the Dutch adventure less happily, and tells us that he was still far from well or at peace. "A few more trips of this sort would effectually ruin me, as it is about the same thing as taking a vacation—my expenses at home running on just the same and nothing coming in. I had to run home before I had half done the Thames trip, and make some drawings for pay, and had the same trouble with the Lake drawings last year. We were a little over twenty days in Holland, and visited nearly thirty towns, beside doing a lot of country travel, so you can readily understand that our sketches are of the scantiest description. It's all very well for Boughton, who proposes to use a lot of his sketches in pictures, but I am not quite so prosperous a cuss, and am worried well-nigh crazy with demands on me for money. My doctor has forbidden me to work more than four hours a day—which is all very well—but rather impracticable. Every rap I receive—and of late there has been

mighty little—goes to pay some debts contracted during my illness. I have pawned a good many things I can do without, and still I cannot seem to keep up. I think it would be a cheap job on Harpers' part to discharge me, and call it square. I caught a cold crossing the Channel the other night, and was in bed nearly five days, and the row and confusion incident to moving has unsettled me generally."

Returning once again to the Dutch trip, in a later letter to Charles Parsons, adjuring him to persuade the Harpers to allow more time for such expeditions, Abbey says: "Imagine a country brimful of interest, almost as large and as thickly settled as the State of New York, run over in less than a month, with no stoppage in any one place of longer than a day and a half, with a constant anxiety not to miss anything that ought to be had, and a still more constant regret that it was utterly impossible to do justice to any feature of a place other than the most trivial. The mere physical fatigue of travelling at such a rate almost prevented any work at all. At several of the most interesting places we saw we were unable to stop more than an hour. I finally hit upon the plan of buying the complete costume of the peasants of each district, and all the photographs I could get, and these, with the roughest possible notes, some written, some hastily sketched, are all I have had to work from in the drawings sent you. You will readily agree with me, I think, that this is not quite the right way to do work of substantial value."—In the very pleasant work which resulted from this trip, entitled *Sketching Rambles in Holland*, is a picture by Abbey entitled "Selling Costumes," in which we probably see the two collaborators. Further description of the volume is deferred until its appearance a few years later.

The letter of November 6th is the last in 1880. On December 11th Mr. Lillie left hurriedly for Munich, where Mrs. Lillie was ill with peritonitis. Abbey accompanied him, and there for some weeks he remained, lodging at 7/3 Gabelsberge Strasse, studying in the galleries, and inquiring into the mysteries of oil paint. One of his last tasks before leaving for Munich had been to make drawings of the Beefsteak Club and the armoury in the Lyceum Theatre, to

1 That's fweetly touch't I muſt confeſſe:
Thou art a manne of worthineſſe:
But hark how I can now expreſſe
My Ivne vnto my Neatherdeſſe

[He ſings.

Chor A fygard note! and found as ſweete
As Kine when they at milkinge meet

1 Nowe for to win thy Heifer faire
Ile ſtrike thee ſych a nimble aire
That thou ſhalt faye thy ſelfe, 'tis rare:
And title me without compare

Chor: Laye by awhile yovr pipes & reſt
Since both have heare deſerued the beſt

2 To get thy fleerling, once again
Ile play thee ſych another ſtrain
That thou ſhalt ſwear my pipe do's raigne
Over thine eat as Soueraigne

Chor And Lallage ſhall tell by this
Whoſe nowe the prize and wager is

A BEUCOLIC, OR DISCOURSE OF NEATHERDS.

"SELECTIONS FROM HERRICK."

illustrate an article on Henry Irving by Joseph Hatton. Abbey also had one or two sittings from Miss Ellen Terry for the same article; but there is no record that any drawing was completed. Many years later, in 1906, when Miss Terry celebrated her stage jubilee, Abbey contributed to the souvenir programme a drawing of Olivia in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

Writing to Charles Parsons from Munich on January 2nd, 1881, he says: "I have been much disappointed in the proofs of my work you have lately sent me. I hardly think it a fair thing to process the Herrick drawings so badly as the 'Neatherds' set are done. All the delicacy I have tried to put in them has vanished, and they have a dreadfully coarse look to me. Why not leave the type part as it is, and engrave the pictures? The 'Bellman,' too, is a *beastly* cut by Muller. The standing figure is cross-eyed, and the cut generally is entirely without any character at all as line work. It has a look as though it had tarlatan stretched over it to keep the flies off. Two of the *Castle in Spain* cuts are very, very bad. I hope to Heaven this novel isn't going to appear in the *Magazine*. I like very much the cuts Smithwick made of the 'Borrowdale Yews' and of 'I Come Back, Amassy' [illustration to "Mrs. Flint's Married Experience," by Rose Terry Cooke], and the little view of 'Ulleswater' [all in *Harper's*, December, 1880]. The Gallery here is very rich in early German work. There are some fine Holbeins and a fine show of Riberas, and a fine head of Titian. The Rubens-Vandyke school I care less and less for the more I see of it. Though some of the Rubens work is certainly stupendous, I have far more sympathy with the 15th and 16th century schools."

Mr. Charles Mente, whose reminiscences of Abbey in the Art Department at Harpers' are quoted in an earlier chapter, was living in Munich at this time. "I saw Abbey," he wrote, "continually. I was a student at the Royal Academy, and he came to my rooms almost every day towards evening. While there he kept on with his illustrations for *Harper's*, and when a draft came he always spent some of it for costumes, weapons, or whatever he could get that was worth getting. He was an admirer of Dietz's work (Pro-

fessor Wilhelm Dietz, who was then professor at the Royal Academy), and as he seemed desirous to study under him for a short time we called at his studio one day with a portfolio of proofs of Abbey's work. Dietz was very pleasant and glad to meet him; he knew of his work, having seen some illustrations in *Harper's Magazine*. Indeed, many Munich artists were familiar with his work, and bought *Harper's* mainly on account of his illustrations. As Dietz had no studio empty in the Academy then that Abbey could utilize, he advised him to get one on his route so he could drop in often and see him, but nothing came of this as he shortly after went back to London. At Abbey's request I engaged a clever Dietz pupil by the name of Erdelt, a good painter of heads, to give him a lesson in painting. We took our stretchers to Erdelt on the day appointed. The model was an old woman, and at Abbey's request Erdelt painted also, as he wanted to see him work."

The prevailing tone of the next letters, written in February and March from London to Charles Parsons, was still dismal; but Abbey confesses to a little social gaiety again. "Boughton gave a dinner the other night to Booth [Edwin Booth, the American actor]. Edmund Yates, W. S. Gilbert, Ernest Hart [the surgeon and collector], old Browning, and many other people were there. Charles Green [the water-colour artist and illustrator] gave a studio party the other night. A lot of men were there. Old Dalziel was one of them, and he is most enthusiastic over the American magazines. Everybody is, but the preference is usually given to *Scribner's*. I walked part of the way home with Tenniel, who is a remarkably well preserved old boy —looks like a retired Colonel."—Tenniel was then fifty-eight; he lived on until 1914. Dalziel was probably George Dalziel (1815–1902), eldest of the three Dalziel brothers, all of whom had been engravers in their time and were intimately associated with the rise of English black-and-white art. Among Abbey's cherished books were their editions of the *Arabian Nights*, with drawings by Houghton, Millais and others and their *Goldsmith* illustrated by Pinwell.

In the same letter Abbey urges on the controller of *Harper's* the importance of both the editor (Mr. Alden) and Charles Parsons

coming to London to get the English point of view for themselves —since the magazine, hitherto imported, was now published in London independently. He expresses a great desire to return to America, offering to take Charles Parsons's place in the Art Department for a little time and so release him to visit England. This is interesting: "I painted the figures in a landscape of Ernest Waterlow's —at the last minute, when he was in a dreadful stew about them.... Linton came and lunched with me on Sunday in all the prosperity of a green velvet coat, and told me he gets one thousand guineas for each of those large pictures of the young warrior's adventures.... He has also an order from a Manchester gentleman to paint two subjects and six single figures from each of Walter Scott's novels. These chaps are all aggravatingly prosperous. Colin Hunter is off in a yacht to the Mediterranean, having sold out. Boughton is sold out, and everybody is taking a long breath now that the agony of show-Sunday is over and the pictures are gone in. . . ."—The picture by Sir Ernest Waterlow, who died in 1919, was called "Outward Bound."

The letter was continued on April 14th. "I was up rather late last night—Tadema had a small party on. Leighton was there and Millais and Poynter, and there was wonderful music by Joachim and Piatti and Madame Schumann.... Lowell was there too.... I wanted to hear Sir Frederic fiddle, but he wouldn't before swells like Joachim and Piatti. He was kind enough to say I had been very ill-advised in being persuaded to return to America—that it only rested with me to be whatever I would in England. He has a way of saying things like this that is extremely alluring....

"I am trying hard to work off what I have on hand. At Dalziel's the other day I saw a large number of wonderfully beautiful drawings by Pinwell and Millais and Walker and North and many others. Whenever Pinwell or Walker or North or anybody else would bring him a drawing that he liked, he would order a picture of it. He has both of Pinwell's 'Pied Piper' pictures, and most of his other things except 'The Great Lady,' which is in America." I think I have already said something of how high a place among Abbey's heroes

was occupied by George John Pinwell, who had died in 1875 at the early age of thirty-two, while Abbey was free-lancing in New York. Abbey had one of his original sketches.

These were for Abbey anxious and arduous days. Not only was he overworked and not really strong, but the want of pence was constant, both for himself and for his father. The letters to Charles Parsons are filled with financial worries; and a bill for dilapidations at 72 Bedford Gardens, which he gave up in the spring—moving to Alfred Parsons's house at 54—put the finishing touch. The necessity then became so great that he had to ask the *Graphic* for work that would lead to immediate payment—his first non-Harperian commission in this country. He was also made uneasy by the different views held by himself and Franklin Square as to the value of magazine articles—Abbey holding that the best was always the cheapest in the long run, and that each task should be done as though it were to be the final treatment of the subject, and the firm holding that the fullest expenditure of time and energy was not always called for—or, in other words, that some commissions might be taken more lightly than others. The competition of *Scribner's* was also much on Abbey's mind, and altogether he was, in this 1881 summer, as little like his true gay and buoyant self as ever in his life.

But the tide suddenly turned. A more than sufficient draft arrived from Franklin Square, and visits to Lechlade with Alfred Parsons and to the Highlands with William Black set up his health again and prepared him for the happiness of the return to America in late September. To Lechlade, on the upper Thames, on the borders of Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, he was to remain true through life, even to making his home for over twenty years near the neighbouring town of Fairford. It will be time to speak of Fairford and its vicinity later; here let it merely be said that Lechlade's cool loveliness is untouched since that day. It is a place that no Abbey pilgrim can disregard, for it was in the Swan Inn that he found the long window (since removed) which forms the background for the water-colour "The Sisters," and at Buscot rectory, a mile down the river, he found the panelled hall which forms the scene of the water-colour

"The Widower"; while at Bridge House, Lechlade, many drawings for *The Deserted Village* were, in 1890, to be made.

Writing to Charles Parsons on September 15th, he thus described his Scotch experience. "I had certainly a most delightful week in a most wonderful country. The most indescribably grand and solemn and lonely land I've ever seen. Black has a steam yacht with his shooting, and we cruised all about Mull and the Lochs about Oban. We couldn't go far, as the coal accommodation was limited, but we took the steamer through the Sound of Mull and to Staffa. They left us a small boat at Staffa, where I sketched, and which is an awful place, and then we sailed across from there to Iona in the sunset, and I saw the purple Dutchman's Cap and Gometra and little Colonsay and the Island of Rum and the peaks of Skye behind it, and the three peaks of Jura, and all the wild places we have read of in *Macleod of Dare* and *White Wings*. Black showed me where Castle Dare would have been built if anybody had ever built it, and I sketched hard, making notes of the wonderful skies and the mists on the hill sides. As for character—the few people there are, I should think, had lots of it, but there's scarcely a house to be seen and very few boats; but everyone knew Black, big and little. We stayed at Iona one night at a little bit of an inn and were nearly walked away with by the rats. I wished that I could have stopped longer and gone on to Skye, but I had to leave that until another time. I have quantities of sketches useful and a few ornamental." —The fruits of this Black and Abbey partnership did not reach the public until December, 1883, when, under the title "A Gossip about the West Highlands," Black recorded a number of entertaining experiences on the coast. The only reference to his companion is at the close: "I never in my life saw despair so visibly depicted on a human countenance as when he [Abbey] took out his neat little sketchbook and then looked up at the mountain Giants of Glencoe." The little sketchbook, however, behaved nobly, as the drawings, in due time reproduced, testify.

The chief *Harper* drawings for 1881, all or nearly all of which were done in 1880, were for Herrick's poems—their sweetness and light

adding a new charm to that increasingly popular magazine. But not until the number for October, 1881, the month in which Abbey arrived in America, was his name mentioned in the index. The occasion was a drawing, engraved by Henry Wolf, for frontispiece, entitled "With Grandpa." In the June number had appeared an interesting foretaste of what was to be Abbey's principal work as a draughtsman, in two drawings for an article on "Ballads and Ballad Music, illustrating Shakespeare."

CHAPTER XIV

AN AMERICAN INTERLUDE

1881–1882 Aged 29

In New York with Alfred Parsons—58½ West 10th Street—The Tile Club Again—A Second Visit to Long Island Another Club Discussion—*Harper's Christmas*—W. A. Rogers's Recollections—Painting at High Pressure—The Founding of "The Kinsmen"

ABBEY and Alfred Parsons sailed for New York on September 26th, 1881, arriving there on October 7th, and forgetting their bad passage in the warmth of their welcome, part of which took the form of a Tile Club dinner in their honour. Indeed, the return of their "Chestnut," bringing "The Englishman" (as they were to call Mr. Parsons) with him, had a galvanic effect on the Club, which not only at once set forth on the annual summer tour that had been postponed to include the two friends, but under his inspiration blossomed forth, as we shall see, into successful authorship.

Abbey's first concern was to find a studio, and this he did at 58½ West 10th Street, which was taken in partnership with his cousin, Charles Truslow and Alfred Parsons, and which subsequently was to become famous as the New York quarters of Colonel Carter of Cartersville, the lovable hero of Hopkinson Smith's novel. To-day the place exists no more, having been destroyed or incorporated in No. 58 West 10th Street proper. The new tenants were no sooner established than they put the place at the disposal, in the evenings, of the Tile Club, and a few months after their return to England the Club took it over as their premises. The following description of it by George Parsons Lathrop in *The Art Amateur*, applies chiefly to it at that later time, but it will help us to visualise Abbey's surroundings too: "The entrance, which is so unobtrusive as to be easily missed in the dark, even when one knows where it is and keeps a look-out for it, remains as non-committal as ever. The fortunate guest who betakes himself thither burrows through the narrow passage under the outer building with a pleased sense of engaging in

mysterious business—attending a secret conference, say, of the International. But at the end, behold! a small flagged courtyard, a patch of starry sky above, and off on one side, beyond the dim and broken forms of the larger houses, a tall, pointed clock-tower with glowing dial-face, and close in front the mellow lights of festal windows in the two-storey Tilers' Den. The parlour has been panelled, and a high shelf, above the level of the average level head, runs along one side of the room, laden with large bronze jars and other objects of æsthetic value.... Pictures by the members or other artists are hung here and there; a road through autumn foliage, beside a harbour with ships, by Hopkinson Smith; one of Abbey's quaint and trenchant figure-pieces, perhaps, done in pen and ink; a Bo-peep shepherdess from Winslow Homer, presenting skilful gradations of contrast in green and white; or it may be that, glancing around, your eye meets the trembling glow of a humid English sunset by Alfred Parsons."

On October 26th, 1881, the Tile Club started for Port Jefferson, Long Island, on its postponed holiday, and a most exhilarating week followed. The party consisted of William Laffan, Arthur Quartley, Frank Millet, William Paton, William Baird, William Chase, Alden Weir, Frederic Dielman, Napoleon Sarony, Abbey and Alfred Parsons. All made sketches, and all made jokes; but of their adventures no record was kept, as had been of the historic week in 1878 when Long Island was discovered.

So much for play. Abbey was busy, too, on a water-colour or so, and on various tasks for *Harper's*, chiefly the Herrick; while he contrived to blend play with work by instigating the Tile Club to prepare a Christmas Miscellany. The following conversation, as reported by William Laffan in the resulting publication, tells the story better than a later historian can:

"Something had to be done.

"The maintenance and perpetuation of the Club depended on it, for inactivity was nothing short of fatal.

"The situation was grave; but as it had never been other than grave, it was not especially oppressive, and was merely stimulative to renewed fertility of expedient.

"'We might,' said a member of whom there had been reasonable suspicion that he had designed a new wall-paper, 'we might decorate a church.' . . .

"'Let's do a book,' said 'The Englishman' [Alfred Parsons]. 'It would sell well.'

"'It might,' said the Bone, 'providing that none of us wrote it.' . . .

"'Nonsense!' said the small 'Chestnut.' 'A book won't go at all. What we ought to do is something pictorial, and as new as possible. Get up a Christmassy thing. Do the best we can for it, and get all the people we know to write for it. We've got cheek enough, I imagine.'

"'Not a bad notion that,' said the worthy 'Hawk' [Napoleon Sarony].

"'You see,' said the 'Chestnut,' with the fire of speculation kindling in his eye, 'a good, big Christmassy paper is wanted. They've got 'em everywhere else, and why should we be without them here? We can make the pictures, the engravers can fix them so that they will have some merit, and the authors will give a real value to the production. See?'

"'Great head! Great head!' said the Club.

"'Modest, too,' said the 'Bone.'

"'Besides,' pursued the 'Chestnut,' 'we needn't have any bother about it. We can make Polyphemus Laffan do all the work. The labour will be mostly manual, and that is his gift, if he has any.'"

That dialogue formed part of the letterpress of a very notable compilation entitled *Harper's Christmas: Pictures and Papers done by the Tile Club and its Literary Friends*, published both in America and England for Christmas, 1882. It consisted of a number of illustrations by Elihu Vedder, Reinhart, Boughton, Millet, Alden Weir, Hopkinson Smith, Alfred Parsons, Abbey and others, and stories and poems by some of the best writers of the day, including Thomas Hardy, W. D. Howells, Mark Twain, T. B. Aldrich, G. W. Curtis, and Joel Chandler Harris, whose contribution Abbey illustrated—an office that he performed also for a poem by E. C. Stedman. The result was a very entertaining medley, which produced so much money for the Club that it took to feasting, and declined on a wave of splen-

did persistent hospitality. Not, however, until it had set before the world still another proof of its versatility, for, in 1887, appeared that imposing and sumptuous volume which Earl Shinn and Hopkinson Smith wrote, and all the members illustrated, and Houghton, Mifflin and Co. published: *A Book of the Tile Club*, from which passages have already been borrowed here and there. This work tells us much of what American artists of that time, *circa* 1886, were doing, and how distinguished was some of their work. It contains many plates in phototype and many line drawings in the text. The frontispiece is "A Woman in White," by the late W. M. Chase. On the title page is one of St. Gaudens's fascinating reliefs. Abbey contributed his water-colour "The Old Song," a number of sketches, and one or two portraits of fellow Tilers, including W. A. Paton. Alfred Parsons is represented by a painting, "Sunny Morning," and many drawings. F. D. Millet, Gedney Bunce, Hopkinson Smith, C. S. Reinhart, Frederic Dielman, Arthur Quartley, R. Swain Gifford, J. Alden Weir, and Elihu Vedder are among the other painters illustrated. Among those who contributed only line drawings are A. B. Frost, Stanford White, and George H. Boughton.

Mr. W. A. Rogers, whose recollections of Abbey at Harpers' have been already quoted, has an interesting memory of Abbey at work in the studio at No. 58½, and of the old coloured manservant who kept it more or less shipshape. "The story," he says, "of a visit to this artistic home will give, I think, a picture quite characteristic of Abbey and his life there. An exhibition was to be held at the Academy, and on this particular day the private view was to be given. I had kept away from the studio for some time, knowing that Abbey was working on an important water-colour, but, supposing, of course, that it was completed and in its place at the Academy, I walked up the little narrow stairs which carried the visitor directly into the studio. There was Abbey at work on the face of one of the figures in his exhibition picture, with a rug sketched in, but with one end entirely unfinished—and it was then twelve o'clock. I took one look and said 'Good-bye, old man,' and almost fell over the old coloured man who had shown me up in my haste to get out.

"'Hold him, William! Don't let him get away!' Abbey called down the stairs, and plunged down after me, caught me by the arm and dragged me up again. 'We're going to have lunch in a few minutes and you must stay.'

"'But,' said I, as we struggled on the stairs, 'your picture will never be done in time.'

" 'Oh, yes it will; besides the jury has passed it, and the frame is hanging in the gallery,' he replied. And then, remembering the days when we used to work on the same block at Harper's, he said, 'If you were a real friend you would get a brush and paint in that rug while I fuss over the girl's nose.' (His model, by the way, was sitting over in a corner reading a newspaper.)

"About one o'clock, Gedney Bunce came in, old William announced lunch, and we descended to the dining-room. Here we sat, Abbey talking of Tadema, Boughton, Barnard and many of his other friends, of pictures he had seen and experiences in England, leaving the table occasionally to dive into a big portfolio and bring out a sketch to show me, until I became so nervous thinking of the unfinished picture upstairs that I finally coaxed him over to the foot of the stairs, took him by the shoulders and forcibly started him up to the studio.

"That night I went to the Exhibition in fear and trembling, dreading the fiasco of that empty frame; but there was the picture, two girls at a piano. . . Magic? Yes, it was the work of a magician." The picture in question, which served as a frontispiece to *Harper's Magazine* in May, 1883, was "The Sisters," begun at Lechlade in August, 1881.

Resuming Mr. Rogers's narrative: "One of Abbey's most beautiful traits was his sympathetic interest in what the other men were doing or trying to do. I seldom went to his studio, for I felt his popularity was likely to swamp him; but he came every now and then to mine, and it was always his delight to rummage through my sketches, making helpful and illuminating comments. There was never the least assumption of 'knowing it all' on his part, but a sincere desire to be helpful to a friend. As it is my belief it is the impression a man

makes on those who know him well, and not so much what he says and does, which constitutes the real man, I must repeat that beyond the Abbey who attracted you by his humorous and engaging manner, the good companion and true friend, one always felt there was a greater man who dwelt apart, who lived in a different age and world, into which you caught but glimpses. His mind was like an old English inn, to which the characters of a bygone day came to refresh themselves before they stepped out upon the printed page, there to live their lives over again—sad, quaint, or gay—and to become our friends for all time. Over the threshold of this inn you could never step. All that was possible was to catch an occasional glimpse through the windows." Mr. Rogers closes his recollections of Abbey with these words: "The last time I saw him was at the Century Club in New York, when we sat together for an hour or more. When we rose to go up to the dining-room, he placed his hand on my shoulder, and so we walked up the stairs and to the table. Whether he had, with his fine psychic nature, a premonition that it would be our last meeting, I do not know, but it was one of those gracious and charming acts which endeared him to all who were fortunate enough to win his friendship."

Abbey was naturally much at Franklin Square during his 1881–1882 visit to New York. Not only was his position with the Harpers thenceforward more secure and important, but more than one new subject for illustration was hit upon in their conferences, notably that one by which his greatest early fame was made—*She Stoops to Conquer*.

It was on April 3rd of this year, 1882, that the Anglo-American Association called "The Kinsmen" was founded. The occasion was a dinner at Florence House, New York, the original members being Abbey, Lawrence Barrett the actor, Lawrence Hutton the writer, William Laffan, Frank Millet, and Brander Matthews. Abbey designed the symbol for the Club, representing John Bull and a Red Indian fraternising, each with a glass in his hand. "The Kinsmen" had no club house, but met and still meet periodically, in this restaurant and that, with the purpose of narrowing the Atlantic.

CHAPTER XV

ENGLAND AGAIN

1882–1883 Aged 29–31

Costume *versus* Dress—A Tour in Germany and Denmark—Black's *Judith Shakespeare*—Abbey's *Herrick* Published—Wood-Engraving and Process—Illustrations to *She Stoops to Conquer* Begun—"The Widower"—Reinhart—"Responsibility"—Illustrations to Pope—Austin Dobson—Poetical Tributes—The "Kinsmen" at Stratford—Mary Anderson

ABBEY and Alfred Parsons returned from America in May, 1882, and in June they were in Paris to see the Salon. Under the date July 11th, 1882, is a letter from Thomas Hardy to Abbey remarking, "I follow your drawings in *Harper* with great interest and hope you will never exhaust the range of subjects you have chosen to make your own"; which suggests the reflection that it was a very happy instinct that had led Abbey to confine himself to reconstructing the congenial past. Since what we call costume—as opposed to dress—is too old to be old, it follows that he was to be always fresh. By obeying the fashions within our own memory dress is always going out of date. To look at Victorian or even Edwardian *Graphics* is to be made melancholy by thoughts of a too recent past; all these people are, we know, either declining or dead. Old *Punches* can equally depress, for no matter how excellent the joke beneath the drawing, one is concerned for the days that once were gay and are now no more. But the eighteenth century is so remote that death has lost its sting; well outside our ken, it is so far away as to be "once-upon-a-time"—and Abbey is its most triumphant explorer and exponent.

On July 19th Abbey started for Lubeck to meet Frank Millet and Swain Gifford and accompany them on a projected tour through North Germany, Denmark, Norway and Sweden for *Harper's Magazine*. But the trip was not a success, and he never spoke of it with anything but regret for wasted time; nor was the record of it ever published. A letter to Charles Parsons written at Bergdorf, in N. Germany, on August 20th, recounts experiences: "A whole district left Holland in the sixteenth century, and emigrated to a similar sort

of land about three miles from this little town, and called it Vierland. They must have been well-to-do, as the houses they built are very large, built of brick and carved timber; most elaborately carved, many of them are, with inscriptions—telling when they were built and who did it, and praying God to bless them and all who come in and out, sometimes running all round the house, elaborately carved rooms in solid oak, wonderful old furniture, and all sorts of old-world ways which Millet will dilate upon. The people built dykes to keep out the sea, and the houses are in the drained land below, just as they are in Holland. They are market gardeners, and the whole district, covering a good many square miles, is one great garden, filled with orchards and flowers and vegetables of every sort."

Abbey passes on to give utterance to a disability under which every illustrator of travel must have suffered and will suffer: "The great difficulty I find in getting subjects for an article of this sort is that the people are not doing anything pictorial, or rather illustratable. You can't always 'do' people working in the fields or on the way home, or sweeping the streets, or reading their Bibles on a Sunday, or drinking beer before inns; yet unless you stop some time—long enough to get a glimpse of their daily lives—these are the only subjects that present themselves. Market places are always the most picturesque spots in these foreign towns, but for illustrative purposes it is always the same thing. In Denmark it took so long to get from one place to another, the trains are so unutterably slow—ten miles an hour being considered quite a crazy rate of speed—that, although we travelled over the whole extent of that very poor and worked-out little kingdom, there is such a mournful sameness in the doings of the inhabitants thereof that it can easily be comprehended in a series of a very few articles indeed.

"Unlike Holland, it has no art history. The extremely meagre and third-rate talent of Thorwaldsen is so much greater than any other art sensation the country has ever had that they talk of him still.... In Holland there is enough material in nearly every town, however little, to make an interesting magazine article. The costumes are different in each village. In Denmark it has been the same sort of

thing, but latterly nearly all the picturesqueness has disappeared from their dress, which, owing possibly to the extreme poverty of the people, has gradually become more and more utilitarian, until to-day it is of the plainest and meagrest description."

Abbey returned to England at the end of August and at once joined Alfred Parsons at the Swan Inn at Lechlade, where, the Herrick drawings being done, he hoped to find some background for *She Stoops to Conquer*. While there he began the water-colour "The Widower," setting his scene in the hall of Buscot Rectory, a beautiful square house said to be built by Inigo Jones, standing remote and apart, with its church, amid the meadows beside the Thames. William Morris, then living at Kelmscott, which is a mile or so down the river, was a friendly neighbour, and the two artists often went over to see him.

Soon after their return to London a letter arrived from William Black which was to have some influence on Abbey's career, in that it led to his illustrations for the novelist's story *Judith Shakespeare:* a task in which Abbey had need of all his knowledge and adaptability, for it meant that he was henceforward for some months to drive the sixteenth century, as represented by Shakespeare's daughter, and the eighteenth in *She Stoops to Conquer*, in double harness. In a letter to Charles Dudley Warner on the theory of illustrating, which was never sent, and from which I quote again in a later chapter, Abbey says, "One of my most interesting experiences was making the *Judith Shakespeare* drawings, some of which were arranged before the story was written out and the whole ground and scheme of action of the story gone over and studied with him [William Black] on the spot. This, I think, is exceptional—probably owing to the fact that Black had artistic leanings before he took up the pen;" but these Stratford expeditions were not until the following year.

At the end of 1882 was published the first book to make Abbey's genius known outside the pages of *Harper's Magazine*—his edition of Herrick, of which we have seen much while it was in the making for serial publication. Most of the drawings had appeared in *Harper's;* a few were new. The decorative title ran thus: *Selections from*

the Poetry of Robert Herrick: with Drawings by E. A. Abbey, and these drawings were dedicated by the artist to his friend Alfred Parsons, a few of whose flower-piece headings were included. Mr. Austin Dobson supplied a preface, concerned wholly with the poet. Abbey's hand may not have in the Herrick quite its full cunning and mastery, but there are abundant indications of what was to come. The book, even if it shows him only in the making, must have convinced English readers not only that here was a new artist with endless possibilities of grace, power and fancy, but that a young American had, in two or three years, succeeded in recapturing more of the spirit of England than many an indigenous draughtsman can do in a lifetime.

One of the interesting features of the Herrick is the fact that most of the drawings are engraved. Mechanical process was soon to dominate the illustrator, but in this volume he had the advantage of such translators into wood as Smithwick, Cole, J. P. Davis, Carson, Closson, and Hellavelle—all, or nearly all, now unfamiliar names, but men to whom the readers of the illustrated books of those times owed a great debt. Most have passed away, but happily Mr. Timothy Cole still survives to practise, almost alone, his beautiful art. More than once, in his letter, Abbey expresses appreciation for Cole's and Smithwick's work. Writing to Charles Parsons he says: "Smithwick's cut of the 'Mad Mayde' is most beautiful, and so is the cut by Cole. I hope he will have a good many of my things. He and Smithwick are the men for *me*."

We have already seen, while it was in preparation, much of Abbey's *Harper's* work for this year: such as the Herricks, the drawings for the article on Irving, and for that on a Surrey village. But he had also a humorous frontispiece entitled "Fallen Short," in which an arrow carrying a love-letter intended for a young lady in one garden alights at the feet of an old maid in the next; and two drawings for a poem entitled "Pastor Dankwardt."

A letter to W. B. Abbey at the end of October, 1882, tells of progress. Writing from Bedford Gardens the artist says that he is now really about to begin on *She Stoops to Conquer* in earnest, and he was sufficiently true to his word to have twelve drawings nearly done by

THE WIDOWER.

WATER-COLOUR.

Two feet by one foot six inches.

1883.

December 5th. He was also at work on "The Widower," which he thus describes: "An oldish man in black, with a pretty daughter in white and black doing him up for church; a little boy all done and starched is sitting by in a big chair. It is in an old panelled hall, with window seat and black chimney piece." Writing to Reinhart a little later he says: "I am just finishing the interior, 'The Widower,' and have with great pain and inconvenience stuck to full wash throughout, which I don't think I will do again."

The first letter of 1883—to Reinhart, in Paris—is another proof of Abbey's readiness (even though a "selfish three-cornered bachelor," as he somewhere called himself) to help others. "I have been thinking," he writes to his old associate in Harpers' Art Department, "of your undertaking some more important work than you have in hand, and wish to urge you to beat about and get hold of something that will make a book and at the same time get you out of the humdrum of magazine work. Barnard thinks your work is the best that is published in the American magazines, and Fildes spoke of it the other evening in the warmest terms. I don't think you ought to let another year go by without going into *something* that will help you out of your present routine of work. Don't make it as big as the Herrick book. A book half the size would have done better.

"I am in the depths of despondency about *She Stoops to Conquer*. I have got costumes and furniture galore, but, with the exception of one drawing of the scene in the inn, I have done nothing to satisfy me. Old Hardcastle, strange to say, is the stickler, and I've got a good old man, too. A splendid old fellow came the other day—very fat, must weigh 200—and I'm thinking of throwing over the three drawings I've already made of the old man and using this new one."

A week later, writing to Reinhart again, Abbey remarks incidentally: "Am a little grayer to-day from having just delivered three children safe home who had been lent to me to take to the pantomime; I don't think they caught cold, but am sure they'll all have stomach aches. . . . First returns from 'Herrick' up to December 15th 600 dols.!"—The children were the Messels, one of whom, Leonard, was to become the husband of Linley Sambourne's daughter.

"RESPONSIBILITY"

To Reinhart on February 13th: "The Institute boys are lively and all putting their best foot first. You must send something. Why don't you do a 'Moyen Age' sub.? Everybody likes your German Reichstag drawings. They *are* good. You will get some lovely subjects on the Loire; get a carriage at Blois (Hotel de France excellent and reasonable). Splendid subject on an old bridge there. Drive down the other side of the river to the Château Chaumont; wonderfully preserved interiors there, furniture, tapestry, beds, etc. You can get permission to paint them—I forget how. Natorp will tell you. . . I am about beginning a water-colour 24 by 16 for the *Pictorial World*, to be chromoed. I only do it because they pay so well. I'm not anxious to be chromoed; £300 is what I am to get." The reference is to a water-colour entitled "Responsibility," which, when reproduced in colour, made no little fame for its creator; for it was notable for a very attractive colour scheme and a whimsical humour. Groups of people in the costume of the early nineteenth century are walking on a pier by the sea. In the foreground are two young girls, between them a formidable duenna, and just behind are two gay gallants much interested in the group in front.

The letter to Reinhart continues: "*She Stoops to Conquer* comes on slowly. The costume is most difficult, and the chairs and things worse. I'm doing a little poem of Pope's to keep my hand in while the big thing simmers."—Pope's "Ode to Solitude"

In February Abbey again became ill; but this was a short attack, and by March he was active again. In this month he was elected a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, his first contribution being a picture painted jointly with Alfred Parsons, "Along the Shore of Silver Streaming Thames," which they had done at Buscot in the preceding summer. The next letter to Charles Parsons, dated March 27th, is a rather gloomy one. Abbey is still hammering away at the advisability of someone from *Harper's Magazine* coming over to London and making captures. *The English Illustrated Magazine*, under Comyns Carr's editorship, was about to be launched, and Carr was throwing a wide net. Abbey had been approached; but, says he, "I have declined to draw for him, for,

although I am no longer under an engagement with the House, I'd rather see my things appear in its publications than anywhere else –as long as they'll have them." The letter continues: "I'm not at all well, and have been really worse than those about me suspect. I suppose this must be the reason that my work is so difficult to me. It seems to me to take longer to do less every day. I don't think the quality of work is any better either. I regard this last year as almost lost, except that I haven't become conceited, but have my eyes opened more and more to the shortcomings of my work. The 'She Stoops' is quiescent at present. I shall forward shortly a series of drawings illustrating—or rather carrying out a little further—'Happy the man whose wish and care,' which I have nearly completed. . ." The reference is again to Pope's "Ode to Solitude," the charm of which in Abbey's rendering could not be surpassed. Abbey's qualification of the function of the illustrator, "carrying out a little further," is interesting. Without the imaginative sympathy which this ideal implies, the illustration of a purely reflective poem, such as Pope's "Ode," would not, of course, be attempted; but the artist's success with it is triumphant.

The letter continues: "Austin Dobson has been inspired to write a song to one of the drawings, which will go to you by Thursday's post. I shall substitute something else for it." This was the very charming "Milkmaid," and Mr. Dobson tells me that he remembers how the refrain came to him as he walked down Campden Hill on his way from seeing the drawing at the Bedford Gardens studio. Here is Mr. Dobson's part of this most happy collaboration, and the drawing which inspired him became Abbey's first exhibit at the Royal Academy.

THE MILKMAID

A New Song to an Old Tune

Across the grass I see her pass;
She comes with tripping pace.—
A maid I know,—and March winds blow
Her hair across her face:—

"HEY, DOLLY! HO, DOLLY!"

With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with may,
Or blooms the eglantine.

The March winds blow. I watch her go:
Her eye is brown and clear;
Her cheek is brown, and soft as down
(To those who see it near!).
With a hey, etc.

What has she not that they have got,—
The dames that walk in silk?
If she undo her 'kerchief blue,
Her neck is white as milk.
With a hey, etc.

Let those who will be proud and chill!
For me, from June to June,
My Dolly's words are sweet as curds—
Her laugh is like a tune.
With a hey, etc.

Break, break to hear, O crocus spear!
O tall Lent-lilies, flame!
There'll be a bride at Easter-tide,
And Dolly is her name.
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,—
Before the spray is white with may,
Or blooms the eglantine.

Mr. Dobson recalls that the "Milkmaid" resulted from a message to Abbey from Franklin Square saying that there must be more pretty girls in his drawings.

Abbey's letter goes on to state that Mr. Dobson and he were contemplating a small volume in partnership; but that particular plan did not mature. The poet and the artist, were, however, to be associated in more than one book, for Mr. Dobson, who had already

contributed a preface to the Herrick, was to furnish a prologue and an epilogue to *The Quiet Life* and a rhyme Introduction and an Envoi to *She Stoops to Conquer*, while Abbey provided both *Old World Lyrics*, 1883, and *At the Sign of the Lyre*, 1885, with exquisite frontispieces, one of which was afterwards used by Mr. Dobson as a bookplate. Abbey's copy of the former book, a gift from the author, contains an inscription which states that to him it "owes its chief adornment;" and when, in 1885, *At the Sign of the Lyre* was published, it was dedicated jointly to Abbey and Alfred Parsons. I have always thought these volumes two of the most beautifully published books of our time. On the flyleaf of another of Mr. Dobson's works, his edition of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, with a frontispiece by Randolph Caldecott, published in the year 1883, are these lines in the poet's hand:

TO E. A. ABBEY

I can read *Goldsmith*, Ah! but you,
Dear Friend, can read and draw him too.
You, with a pen as keen as fine,
Make Maidenhood seem more divine;
More comely middle age; and throw
A ray from Heaven on locks of snow.

While on the subject of the partnership between Abbey and the most graceful and charming poet of latter days—a partnership of the utmost felicity—some lines contributed to the New York *Critic* some years later by Mr. F. M. Smith may be quoted:

WHEN ABBEY DRAWS
(*After Austin Dobson.*)

When Abbey draws, the roses cling
About grey walls; old taverns ring
With jest and song; the brown ales flow,
Quaint old-time maidens laughing go,
And gay-dressed gallants have their fling.
Above green fields the skylarks sing;
By river's brim the willows spring,

And daffodils and daisies blow
When Abbey draws.

A touch of pen and George is King;
A stage-coach comes with lurching swing,
The travellers shout, their faces glow—
Ah! those were merry times, I know.
We get Life's sweet without its sting
When Abbey draws.

Mr. Dobson, in talking to me of Abbey, said that he thought of him always as a child full of the joy of life.

During the Easter holiday Abbey, Alfred Parsons, and the late R.W. Macbeth scampered over the island of Walcheren; while, at the end of May, the two friends paid their usual visit to the Paris Salon. The next letter to Charles Parsons (June 25th) mentions the Goldsmith illustrations. "I dare say it worries you all that I don't get on faster with *She Stoops*—I literally *can't*. I hate the chairs and the same faces and the same dresses, so that I am paralysed when I sit down to work. I could easily run off a lot of drawings that would 'do,' but I don't want to seem to get fatigued just at the end; I see there is a difference, and I wish I hadn't mapped out so many—but they are coming." From August to October, Abbey and Alfred Parsons lived at the White Lion at Bidford-on-Avon, where Abbey found things much easier, with the river to provide him with exercise, and the open air to work in, and frequent visitors. Rowing was in these years one of his greatest delights. As an oarsman, indeed, he was particularly good, and not a little proud of his skill, so that when once at Henley that incorrigible jester J.L. Toole, taking the helm, steered him into this and that party and then excused the mischance by saying that his young friend Abbey was only a beginner, there was trouble. But for every joke played on him Abbey could provide reprisals.

A letter to his brother, written from Bidford, tells us much about his hesitancies as a worker at that time—how far in advance of his powers was his ambition, how exacting a critic of his own per-

STONY GROUND.

WATER-COLOUR.

Approximately two feet six inches by one foot six inches.

1884.

formances he had become. "Time with me is measured in pictures. I begin a water-colour, thinking it will be simple, and usually look forward to finishing it in a month. Before I know it I have spent ten days on a head, then I change my scheme of colour usually, and substitute a dress of a different colour from the one I have painted, and this necessitates alterations all through the picture, and before I have finished three months have slipped by. I began a large water-colour last year at Lechlade and worked at it for weeks and weeks—at least six weeks, I should think—and finally got it in such a mess that I had to chuck it up. I only tell you these things to show how it is with me. I'm sure I wish it were otherwise. . .

"Billy Laffan goes back to America next Saturday. He will let you hear from him when he gets there. We are awfully sorry to lose him—one of the best fellows and the cleanest men on this little sphere. He is coming down to Stratford-on-Avon, seven miles from here, to spend his last two days. Wm. Black and Boughton are coming with him, and as Frank Millet and Larry Hutton and Alfred are here, there will probably be two or three very active days, and then an awful lull."

Larry Hutton was the late Lawrence Hutton, who is known on both sides of the Atlantic as a connoisseur of England, chiefly by his books on the homes and haunts of English authors, a branch of research in which he specialised very pleasantly. He played a more important part in the life of Abbey and certain of Abbey's friends than he guessed, for it was he who discovered Broadway, in Worcestershire, and led the Millets to settle there; but of that more later.

A letter to William Abbey in October, 1883, shows that not only was *The Quiet Life* in contemplation, but also the *Old Songs*, for Abbey refers to his work for "Sally in our Alley," with which the *Old Songs* begin. In the same month he tells Charles Parsons: "I have a very large water-colour on the stocks now—an elaboration of a theme suggested by one of my illustrations to Black's *Judith* . . . I call it 'Stony Ground,' but may alter the title if I don't like that when it is finished. A Puritan family, prayers going on, and a girl looking out of the game—that's all. . . I haven't had but one

proof for over a year. *The Century* has sent Alfred whole piles of proofs. He is hard at work on his Wordsworth—made some extraordinary sketches on the Lakes this summer for it."—This reluctance on the part of Charles Parsons, or an assistant, to provide proofs was a steady grievance with Abbey, and one with which all illustrators will have full sympathy.

Alfred Parsons's notes tell us that the winter of 1883–1884 was a festive one at Bedford Gardens; and among the names of the two friends' more constant visitors and guests are those of John Pettie, Colin Hunter, Austin Dobson, George du Maurier, Linley Sambourne, Tadema, Marcus Stone, Comyns Carr, Luke Fildes, Black and Boughton, of whom only three now (1919) survive. One name occurring now for the first time demands fuller attention—that of Mary Anderson. This famous lady, who was then enrapturing London with her performance of Galatea in Gilbert's play, was (she tells me) taken to Bedford Gardens by Frank Millet one afternoon in the winter of 1883, during a series of very wonderful sunsets; and that an amusing occurrence marks it in her memory, for as they entered they found Abbey and Parsons in a state of high nervousness, because Alma Tadema was expected at any moment in the capacity of critic, and Tadema's verdicts were serious affairs. Suddenly a deep Dutch voice was heard in the passage booming out the information that "The zun has zunk, and all his glories are disabbearing with him," and in burst the famous painter.

Madame de Navarro, as Mary Anderson is now known, has only the happiest recollections of those days. To recall Ned Abbey, she tells me, is to have before her a young vigorous man, with noticeably beautiful eyes and exquisitely delicate eyebrows, always gay—"blithe" is her word—always kind and always ready for fun. "Ned was full of mischief." His hands were noticeable, too—powerful but delicate. Anyone, says Madame de Navarro, that knew anything of character as revealed in the hands would have trusted him on his hands alone.

Abbey was a useful friend for an actress contemplating a Shakespeare revival, and he designed several of the dresses which Miss

Anderson wore in *A Winter's Tale* both as Hermione and Perdita. Nor was it only with costumes that he was concerned. It will be remembered that Hermione, on hearing of the death of Mamillius, falls swooning to the ground : a heavy fall, not without danger; and Abbey contrived an arrangement of springs to lessen its discomfort and risk. In return Miss Anderson sat for him for the water-colour "The Old Song," posing as the girl singing at the harp to two old people; and what with her own height and the painter's natural partiality for tall and slender girls, she attained an altitude that provoked *Punch* to gentle raillery. According to the late Wemyss Reid, who wrote the Life of Black, it was Abbey who brought Miss Anderson and the novelist together: a happy meeting, for henceforward Miss Anderson was to serve him as a Muse. For her beguilement Black planned a thousand parties and excursions and jokes, while she was the heroine of the successor to *The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton—The Strange Adventures of a Houseboat*.

There is every evidence that the Bedford Gardens dinner parties were great fun. The origin of Abbey's Tile Club nickname "The Chestnut" has been explained earlier. By this time the word had assumed its present meaning, as a reproachful description of a tale that is too far from new. Although, as we have seen, the word had a different signification when he first brought it over, Abbey was active to support its new one. Among the Bedford Gardens set, Madame de Navarro tells me, story-telling was highly cultivated. Everyone was a *raconteur*, and there was great competition to bring the very latest and freshest story. But should someone produce a story that was familiar, straightway the notes of the "chestnut bell" were heard—a tiny tinkle proceeding from this pocket and that, everyone being provided with one of these little monitors. On one evening when some of the brightest spirits were present, Abbey arranged with two or three other reprobates, of whom Miss Anderson was one, to ring their bells systematically whether the story was old or not. It was a daring joke—and it failed; for, as a result, and a not unnatural one, the evening, says the now penitent lady, was ruined in a quarter of an hour and never recovered itself.

There was also the institution of the kettle, which was maintained chiefly by William Black. It seems that a story—perhaps it was in *Punch*—had been popular, of a group of navvies boiling a kettle at the end of a station platform, to whom, the day being cold, a waiting Bishop approached both for warmth and company. On asking what they were discussing, he was told that they had agreed that the one among them who could tell the biggest lie was to receive the kettle. Invited to join in the competition, but declining on the ground that he never told untruths, the Bishop was amazed and outraged to have the kettle handed to him. This joke taking Black's fancy, he had a number of tiny kettles made, one of which, in perfect silence, was passed to whatever guest was considered, by the tallness of his remarks, to have earned it. The one which (all unjustifiably) fell to the lot of Mary Anderson, whom Black revered equally as "The Beloved" and "The Wretch," was of solid gold with a pearl for the tiny knob of its tiny lid.

A letter on December 16th, 1883, to Charles Parsons, mentions Black again, saying that the *Judith Shakespeare* drawings are not coming very easily; "which is annoying, because Black is certainly one of my dearest friends over here . . . Tell Laffan that the Haverstock Hillers scooped Alfred and Marcus Stone and Colin Hunter at blind hookey last night at Jimmy Linton's. They all came home this morning in a milk wagon and waked me up to get some money to pay for it."

A week later, to the same correspondent: "There will be a lot of *She Stoops* soon. I have a number finished, but I must keep them for the faces. I went up to Small's the other night and was made envious by the number of drawings he has. . . I hope my drawings are as well taken care of as his are. Cassells always mount them in *passe-partouts* and keep them under glass. I don't care for the *passe-partout* so long as I get the drawings one of these days in a clean condition. . . . Since my return to England I have not had one single proof of my work" [*i.e.*, since May 27th, 1882].

In the magazine in 1883 Abbey had been represented chiefly by the illustrations to the artist-strolls in Holland and to the novel

"THE LADIES OF ST. JAMES'S."

AUSTIN DOBSON

Eighteen inches by thirteen inches.

1882.

("a pack of rot" he called it) *A Castle in Spain*, which he had found so uncongenial. He also illustrated poems by Mr. Dobson and Margaret Veley and a story by Rose Parsons Lathrop called *Prisoners*, and in the December number was the article by Black on the West Highlands, to which reference has already been made, and the beginnings of the exquisite "Quiet Life" series, the first poem being Pope's "Happy the man," with perhaps the most felicitous illustrations of the whole set. But to the "Quiet Life" we shall come later. Mr. Dobson's "Ladies of St. James's" appeared in the same year with two drawings. Everyone knows this charming antithetical poem.

CHAPTER XVI

SOCIABLE NIGHTS AND DAYS

1884–1885 Aged 31–33

With Black in Scotland—A First Salmon—Music and Conviviality—Andrew Lang —Sir Luke Fildes' Recollections—A Dinner to Lawrence Barrett—A Coaching Tour with Andrew Carnegie—Matthew Arnold—Charles Parsons—"Cousin Jo" —*Judith Shakespeare*—A Spring Morning in London—First Exhibit in the R.A. —A Dutch Tableau—Randolph Caldecott

IN the first letter of 1884 (there are only four altogether) Abbey tells Charles Parsons that he is off to Scotland to stay with William Black. A letter from the novelist, to his "Wretch," indicates that the odd experiment (January being hardly the Scotch season) was succeeding:

"Altnaharra, N.B.,
"January 16th, 1884.

"DEAR MISS ANDERSON,

"Along with this should reach you a Scotch salmon, the only creature of its kind likely to be in London at the same moment. I think Mr. Abbey and myself should apologise to you for sending such a thing, for young ladies' presents should be pretty and nice, such as scent baskets, bouquets, volumes of poetry, and the like; but the fact is that this finny and scaly animal is somewhat remarkable, as it is the first that has been caught in any Scotch loch this year, and also it is the first salmon Mr. Abbey has caught anywhere.

"Accordingly there is much rejoicing in the inn among the gillies and keepers, etc., etc., and if Mr. Abbey doesn't show them how to do the cake-walk to-morrow evening, when they are going to have a small and early dance, it will be a most ungenerous return for all their sympathy and congratulations. But why should I bother you, amid all your arduous and delightful labours, with the experiences of the two maniacs who have adventured into the North Highlands in midwinter? I hope the actual presence of the salmon will convince you, at least, that we don't tell lies; and with kindest regards (in which Mr. Abbey would, no doubt, be most glad to join, only that he is half asleep in a novel before the peat fire),

"Believe me, Yours very faithfully,
"WILLIAM BLACK."

MISS HARDCASTLE AND MISS NEVILLE.

MISS HARDCASTLE: "AM I IN FACE TO-DAY?"

Fourteen inches by nine inches.

1884.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER; OR, THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT," ACT I.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

MARLOW AND HASTINGS.

HASTINGS: "UPON MY WORD, A VERY WELL-LOOKING HOUSE; ANTIQUE, BUT CREDITABLE."

Twelve inches by ten inches.

1884.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER," ACT II.

GOLDSMITH.

MISS NEVILLE AND HASTINGS.

HASTINGS: "THOU DEAR DISSEMBLER."

1884.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER," ACT II.

GOLDSMITH.

A FIRST SALMON

Writing to his brother on January 30th from the Savile Club, Abbey says: "I have been rather overworking, and, of course, the result of that has been a general run-downedness—so, inasmuch as Black has been doing the same thing, we started off for the extreme north of Scotland about three weeks ago, where we remained for nearly a fortnight. He has a loch there—the earliest one open—and I got the first salmon of the season out of it—not a very extraordinary one compared to a Rhine salmon I saw at a fishmonger's shop in Bond Street to-day. Mine weighed 10 lb.; the Dutchman weighed 42 lb. I am all right again now, and hope to get on bravely with my pictures . . . I am so unsettled here, with my reputation in a very ticklish state. People don't know whether I'm as clever as I seem, or whether I'll come a cropper before I do anything serious. . . .

"Just to show you how engaged I am—and have been—I send a leaf from my engagement book, which you must return—please. This is Wednesday—the first night I've had off since I left Sutherland. The week began on Sunday. I had a digestion call to make on Boughton in the afternoon, went to a reception in the afternoon at Mrs. Edmund Gosse's to meet Hamo Thornycroft's *fiancée*—and a pretty girl, too—and to dine in the evening with Mrs. Luke Ionides. Monday—model in the morning; five men to dinner in the evening—Boughton, Sambourne, Colin Hunter, Marcus Stone, and Luke Fildes—to eat some canvas-back ducks and a 22 lb. wild turkey sent over by Frank [Millet]. Won ten shillings at blind hookey later, which is a detail. Tuesday—model, and a great sweat to get a drawing off to America by 5.30 post. Dined with Andrew Lang, who is dismal and ill. Later to a musical party at Alma Tadema's: Marie Krebs, Norman Neruda, Piatti, Hollander, and an American girl, Miss Little, did the music. Home 2.30. . . . Dined home, came down here to write some letters and to hear about the Academy election, which takes place to-night—and so it goes. To-morrow night a lot more are coming to eat the rest of the ducks, and a goose which was sent also—Macbeth, Gregory, Waterlow, Caldecott, and four more. I didn't send out the cards, so I don't know the rest. Friday—meeting of the costume committee at the Institute." A postscript

says: "They elected Hunter, who dispersed magnums of fizz like a little man, all the evening, to an admiring circle at the Arts Club. Took him home in a hansom." If Abbey's work hung fire a little at this time there was, one perceives, reason for it!

Several new names occur in the foregoing letter. Andrew Lang, whose association with Harper's was of long duration, was at that time making suggestions for the poems for the two series, "Old Songs" and "The Quiet Life," upon which Abbey was then at work or pondering. Lang was then forty. He survived Abbey by a single year, dying in 1912. The charming frontispiece to *Rhymes à la Mode* which Abbey made for him, is dated July, 1884. Gregory was the late E. J. Gregory, R.A. (then A.R.A.), an artist for whose work Abbey always had a great admiration. Waterlow was Mr. (afterwards Sir) E. A. Waterlow. Caldecott was Randolph Caldecott, then very near the close of his tragically short life. Hamo Thornycroft, the sculptor, married Miss Agatha Cox. Mrs. Edmund Gosse was the sister of the late Lady Alma Tadema. For Mr. Gosse Abbey had recently designed a book-plate, and on the flyleaf of a presentation copy of that critic's edition of Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses*, published this year, 1884, I find a poem in the editor's hand, of which this is the final stanza:

"Ah! were my phrases art as fine
As Reynolds painted, you design,
Not weeds, but deathless flowers, were mine!"

Sir Luke Fildes, whose name is so often met with among the Bedford Gardens company at this time, and who, in 1884, was forty, has the liveliest memories of those nights. Abbey, he tells me, was more consistently out for fun than any man he ever knew, and how he contrived to produce so steady a supply of such exquisite work was a marvel. It was also a marvel that an American should have made old England his own as Abbey did, and have re-created it with such gaiety and charm. Sir Luke Fildes was naturally interested in the young invader from New York not only by reason of his personal attraction, which was very noticeable, but because some of Sir Luke's own early drawings for the *Graphic* were among those

MRS. HARDCASTLE AND HASTINGS.

HASTINGS: "EXTREMELY ELEGANT AND DÉGAGÉE, UPON MY WORD, MADAM."

1884.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER," ACT II.

GOLDSMITH.

E. A. Abbey

which Abbey (as we know) had seen and admired in New York, and which helped him to his resolve to visit England. Conversations on these drawings formed, indeed, their first link. One of Sir Luke's phrases remains in my mind. After extolling Abbey's genius as a draughtsman, he went on to say that when the time came for him to try paint he mastered its intricacies no one knew how. He had had no training in the ordinary sense of the word, but, having to paint, "he just painted."

To the Savile Club, where the letter of January 30th was written, Abbey, Boughton and Caldecott had been elected at the same time. In the reminiscent letter to Mr. Low written in 1908, from which quotations have already been made, Abbey says, "The Savile Club was the first club I joined . . . and I frequently used to see Bob [Stevenson] there, and I remember Louis coming in once, quite unconcerned, in Mrs. S.'s sealskin tippet—a kind of cape thing that was once the fashion, with high puffs on the shoulders." Abbey left the Savile in 1890 on becoming a member of the Reform.

On March 1st Abbey moved into a new studio at 17B Eldon Road, and on April 3rd Alfred Parsons and he gave a dinner to Lawrence Barrett, the American actor, and a fellow Kinsman, among those present, in addition to such friends as we should expect, being Mr. Sargent, Mr. Dobson, George du Maurier, Henry James, Linley Sambourne, Sir John Robinson and Archibald Forbes of the *Daily News*, W.Q. Orchardson, and W.S. Gilbert. Not only was Lawrence Barrett feasted, but a very charming composite gift was prepared for him too. A copy of Mr. Dobson's *Old World Idylls* was "embellished." Abbey began it by drawing on one of the flyleaves; Alfred Parsons supplied a floral decoration; Alma Tadema made a portrait of Antinoë, the Greek girl, in whose honour a club has been founded in America; and Leighton, Millais, Caldecott, Sambourne, du Maurier, and other artists also contributed. The book to-day should be a very precious possession.

In May Alfred Parsons, Abbey, Boughton, Luke Fildes, Hunter and Sambourne went to Paris to see the Salon. William Black's biography helps us a little further, for writing on June 1st, 1884, to his

friend Mr. Creras, he says, "To-morrow, Matthew Arnold, E.A. Abbey and I start away on a coaching trip under the guidance of Mr. Carnegie." He adds, "I wish you were here to join a little dinner-party I am giving at which several Americans will be present—Bret Harte, John Hay, Abbey, Clarence King, Carnegie, and so forth." This is the coaching tour which Black described for *Harper's* in December of the same year, 1885, with a few drawings by Abbey. The route was from London to Salisbury, with Winchester on the way. In Black's description Abbey is referred to as a young American artist conspicuous for his shyness, and much play is made with this imaginary foible.

We know from a letter of Abbey's to his father, dated January 18, 1885, that the article in *Harper's* was largely a hoax, "pure fiction" he writes and adds, "any statement you see about me you may set down as incorrect." Among the guests there described is an elderly scientific man famous for his writings on the molecular theory; but no such person was on the coach. The actual party consisted of the late Andrew Carnegie, a cousin of Mr. Carnegie's, his business manager, Matthew Arnold, Mrs. Arnold and two daughters; a Miss Coleman, of Pittsburgh, and a Miss Bailey, Abbey and Black. Black's account says nothing of Matthew Arnold—probably by arrangement with that fastidious gentleman—but Abbey used to tell how, at Winchester, Arnold hoped to find wallflowers growing in the wall where he remembered them when he was a schoolboy there—and, to his great joy, found them.

In August Abbey was at Tewkesbury with Alfred Parsons; later they met Charles Parsons of Harpers' (who had at last come to England) at Oxford, and rowed him to Reading. The little river holiday over, Abbey writes to his art editor, on August 30th, from London: "I hope after all is said and done that the greatest discovery you have made is that it isn't so very far away—all of this over here, after all! When I first met Willie Winter after his visit to England (don't you remember, when I went to see him about the Stratford article, before I came here myself?) he said to me then that the nine weeks he had spent in England were the most delightful of his life, and that

MISS HARDCASTLE AND MARLOW.

MARLOW: "AND WHY NOT NOW, MY ANGEL? SUCH BEAUTY FIRES BEYOND THE POWERS OF RESISTANCE—PSHAW! THE FATHER HERE!"

1884.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER," ACT III.

GOLDSMITH.

his greatest pleasure there was when the evenings came, before the lights were brought, when he could lean back in his chair and think about it.

"As an unmarried vagabond I, of course, had to step aside many times when I should have liked to be with you. For instance, I frequently make calls upon my bachelor friends at one or two in the morning—and some of the most delightful walks I have ever had in this dear old town have been with unfortunate gentlemen of my acquaintance who have been dragged from their warm beds at ungodly hours and persuaded to take a turn in the moonlight along the Chelsea Embankment (which I dare say you never saw) and to finish with a cup of hot coffee at an early stall—by the rising sunlight. . . .

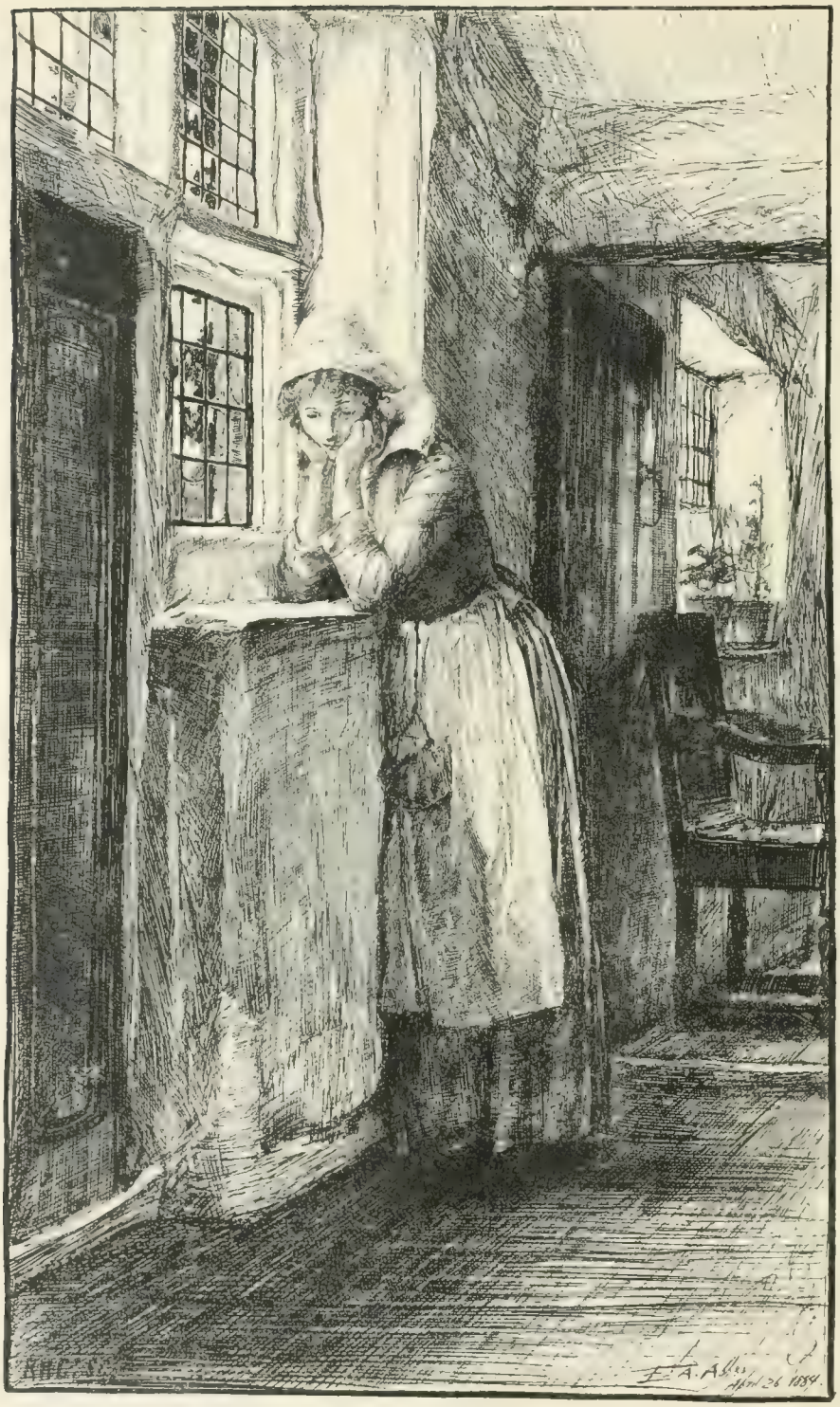
"Still, I am not grumbling at the fates this summer. I have been more than fortunate among my fellow-men in that my very dearest relation on this earth has been with me, and that two of the friends I value most have renewed the bonds that cement us all together, and that when the dark days come in the winter time, and you all in America are sitting over your 'registers' and talking about it, I shall have many a happy hour 'thinking it all over.' [The reference is to Mrs. Curtiss, "Cousin Jo," who had been visiting England.] Cousin Jo and I had a quiet time in Oxford after you left. We endured much miserable weather in the few days we remained, and mooned about College 'quads' and chapels. Sometimes we knew which ones, and mostly we didn't."

With his beloved cousin Abbey then went off to Scotland; and the rest of the year is unrecorded until a letter to Charles Parsons on November 13th, protesting against the treatment of the drawings for Goldsmith's play in the Christmas number of *Harper's*. Such a protest so illuminates Abbey's desire for the best in all things that some of it must be quoted here. "I have written several letters—or beginnings at letters—since I saw the sheets of the Christmas magazine—but I think I may safely write one now that will be dispassionate and at the same time make understood my feeling in reference to the treatment of my work in that number. I have made every sacrifice possible for a man to make in order that these Gold-

smith drawings—as the last I may do—may be as perfect as such drawings can be, and I must say that the way they have been treated has been not only a surprise to me, but a blow which it will take me some time to get over.... Does anybody (I don't really suppose anybody in the factory does think, you know—I am only *supposing* they did) think it a right and reasonable thing to put five drawings on two facing pages and so arrange them that the incidental ones are more important than the important ones; to reproduce the elaborate and carefully worked ones on so small a scale that they cannot be seen, and to translate the sketchy ones the size they are drawn? Did a sense of the fitness of things never suggest to the ingenious person who put these precious pages together that it would be well to maintain a sense of proportion as to the size of the figures on a page? I wonder if the firm of Harper and Brothers consider that the sun rises and sets entirely for their individual benefit, and whether it might not be possible one of these days so far as their magazine is concerned, for those who have wasted their time and brains endeavouring to make it a good one, to be tempted away from them? Money is not *everything* in this world. Not that the money I receive from H. & B. at this present time has anything whatever to do with the fact that I am doing *She Stoops to Conquer* for their magazine. I can make four or five times the money elsewhere, but I choose to fulfil, and more than fulfil, my contract with them, and I expect—I have a right from my position in the world as an artist to demand—that they fulfil theirs."—By the time the drawings reached book-form some of the defects of which Abbey complains were removed.

On December 8th Abbey returned to the charge, his particular and very reasonable complaint being that having been consulted as to the sizes of his drawings when reproduced, and having supplied a dummy, his views should have been respected. "So far as my work is concerned that of the smallest charlatan is treated better. My imitators, who copy whole designs of mine outright, are treated better—that is, placed before the public to greater advantage. . . ."

At the close Abbey says "The Holland book is out of print here," and asks for two American copies—the reference being to the recent


F. A. Allen
April 26 1884

JUDITH SHAKESPEARE.

AN ILLUSTRATION TO WILLIAM BLACK'S NOVEL "JUDITH SHAKESPEARE."
1884.

publication, on both sides of the Atlantic, of *Sketching Rambles in Holland*, by George H. Boughton, A.R.A., with illustrations by the author and Edwin A. Abbey.

The book was dedicated by the older artist to the younger in these terms: "To Edwin A. Abbey, my fellow rambler and fellow sketcher, to whose delightful companionship may be set down any extra washes of *couleur de rose* that may be discovered in these pages by the cold, sad cynic whose good fortune it has never been to ramble and sketch with such a perfect fellow-traveller, this writing is inscribed." Abbey's share of the book, beyond helping to make its preparation a pleasant task, was not great, nor does he figure much in the letterpress; but a few of his drawings are very happy. It must be remembered, however, that they belong to a period anterior by some three or four years to that of publication and that those three or four years had been a period of astonishing development.

Abbey was represented in *Harper's* for 1884 chiefly by the drawings for *Judith Shakespeare*, which ran through the year. They were not republished when *Judith Shakespeare* reached book form. In February appeared the Upper Thames article to which reference has already been made, facing a *Judith Shakespeare* frontispiece dated Bidford, September, 1883, and thus linking it with the same delectable stream; and in the December Christmas number *She Stoops to Conquer* began with a wonderful instalment of drawings.

The first letter of 1885 was to his father, begun on January 18th and finished on February 2nd. "My rest at Christmas"—which was, as usual, spent at Frome with Alfred Parsons—"did my eyes," he says, "a great deal of good—and with the exception of a nervous twitch they are about as usual. I've had a lot of rather wearing work since Christmas finishing enough of *She Stoops* to carry me through until the early spring. My water-colour ["An Old Song"]—which is for Clarence King—is going to occupy me pretty constantly for the coming three months." A characteristic sentence occurs in this same letter, which otherwise is not important: "Tell me how soon you expect to be hard up; *not after* you are."

In March Alfred Parsons had a one-man show at the Fine Art

Society's–"Shakespeare's River," for which Abbey designed a very charming private-view card. On April 21st Abbey wrote to Charles Parsons from the Savile Club: "Why I should sit down to write to you on one of the most beautiful mornings of the year, with the Green Park bursting into bloom opposite this table, and all the gay world of London slowly gliding by in their morning hour on the Row, with all the windows open and the sulky fires quenched in their native grates, and house painters on ladders and ropes and things doing extraordinary acrobatic feats outside the windows, is more than I can tell. A blissful sense of peace and irresponsibility has stolen over me, and I haven't got any money and I owe a good deal, and I fear I have not been just in all my dealings—but last night my picture finished itself, and, keerless-like, I've telegraphed to my lady help to do it up and send it to its destination in a four-wheeled cab. I dined with Marcus Stone at the 'Arts,' and we went to the Minstrels and saw Sweatnam, who fired me years ago with an ambition to be a nigger minstrel, which ambition still holds me.

"Alfred is away in Ireland with Black, and Bedford Gardens is more or less deserted. I casually sleep there (not always) and come down in the morning to find one habitable room, the chairs and tables in all the others meanwhile floating in soap and soda and hot water. I come home at night to find the tray of drinkables and sandwiches anywhere but where it usually lives—now in the back bedroom, and now on the back stairs, and now on a chair in the hall. I don't know where it was last night, similar to the boy at breakfast who was asked by his sister on a very cold morning whether the water in his jug was frozen, and replied 'he didn't know.'

"It is so nice and warm and blossomy here now. Some angel many years since prompted the layer out of Bedford Gardens to plant pear and almond trees in the back and front gardens of the houses, and these last few days the whole street is a mass of blossom pink and white, and the light, the blessed light, which had deserted us for three months, has come back and discovered to us sundry dirty spots and inequalities of tone and bad values of which we had been blissfully ignorant before, and the happy men who have not sent to the

AN OLD SONG.

WATER-COLOUR.

Four feet by two feet four inches.

1885.

Academy, and who are privileged members of a body whose private view is next Saturday—I mean the members of the Water Colour Societies—have had their pictures back and have been working like beavers to get them right—one of which I am whom. I am very dubious about my picture this year. It has passed through many stages—Marcus Stone spent nearly all day on Sunday with me and helped me amazingly. He has an extraordinary faculty of putting himself in your place and seeing things from your point of view, and he seemed to like it. It is a picture of an old man and woman listening to 'An Old Song,' which is being sung to them by a tall girl who is accompanying herself on a harp. The best thing in it is the tea-tray on a table at the left (o.p. side). I should smile if them china things ain't everlastingly painted—I wish I'd had it photographed. The frame looked very well in the show—in the centre at the end of the first room—with 'Abbey' chalked on the wall disclosed in the centre. You will hear all about it anon. If it isn't a go I must do better next whack. I will immediately turn my attention to black and white. Not to-day—I don't intend to do one dam thing to-day.*

"A lot of bachelor people are dining with Fildes to-night. It is the fashion for people to leave town at Eastertime, and many bereft husbands lurk about their clubs and frequent obscure places of amusement. Stone and du Maurier and Perugini and Hunter are to be at Fildes'."

In this year, 1885, Abbey sent his first contribution to the Royal Academy, that he might have an admission card to the varnishing function—No. 1617 "A Milkmaid," the drawing by which Mr. Dobson had been inspired. He did not exhibit there again until 1890.

The high spirits which are evident in the letter to Charles Parsons continued, and Abbey devoted some of them to the preparation of a Dutch tableau for a costume ball given by the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours on May 19th, for the benefit of the

* On receiving "An Old Song" again, after exhibition, Abbey wiped out the figure of the singer and repainted it from a professional model. This water-colour now belongs to Mrs. Holmes Spicer, Manchester Square, London.

Schools, and we learn from the notes of Alfred Parsons that among the tableaux arranged by the various members Abbey's was considered the best and most original.

Among the letters of this year is one from Randolph Caldecott, dated June 30th, a facsimile of which is given. As a result of the allurements held out, Abbey and Alfred Parsons went down to Frensham on August 8th. Mr. Parsons writes: "Abbey had a deep affection for Caldecott, whose simplicity and charm were very sympathetic to him, and the visit always remained in our memories as it was the last time we saw him."

My dear Abby. A happy new
Year to you! Have waited a
Leisure Quarter of this morning
but to no avail — Hardly shall be
happy in the afternoon. Hope
will then tell you I come for
Sunday or Monday. Yrs

are in middle of our hay making
but shall leave a little of the
longest grass in a hill side
for you to cut. Love you all

Found N E. Wind
and plenty. Love to you
Pond smiling. Rose to me.

Sincerely yours,

Cordially

R. Caldecott.

CHAPTER XVII

BROADWAY IN WORCESTERSHIRE

F. D. Millet—Henry James on Broadway—Henry James and Abbey—John S. Sargent—Henry James in 1885—Randolph Caldecott—Artist *versus* Editor

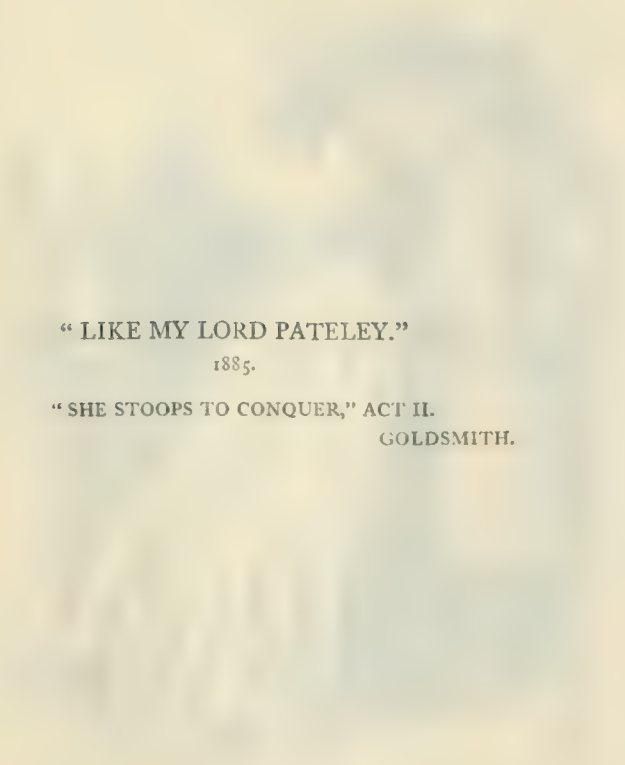
IT was in the summer of 1885 that Abbey first visited Broadway, where he was to spend some time each year until the autumn of 1889; where, at the Lygon Arms, he found a background or so for *She Stoops to Conquer;* where he first seriously attacked the problems of oil painting; and where he met his future wife. At first he lodged at Farnham House, facing the little green; later he moved to Russell House, the first house on the right as one enters the village from the west or from the station, now a large rambling place, with gardens and meadows, but then much smaller; and there was no station then.

Abbey shared Russell House with the late Frank Davis Millet, who, in 1885, was thirty-nine, and had been married for six years, his wife being Miss Elizabeth Greely Morrill, of Boston, Massachusetts. Millet was now settling down to paint in earnest, after a varied career as a drummer in the Civil War (in the 60th Mass. Volunteers); as assistant contract surgeon in the 6th Army of the Potomac; as correspondent for the *Daily News* in the Russo-Turkish war; as a painter, translator, traveller, and a contributor of stories and drawings to the American magazines. His untimely death, shortly after he had been appointed director of the American Academy in Rome, occurred in 1912, in the sinking of the *Titanic*.

There is a charm about Broadway which is not to be explained by words. It is proud to be the largest village in England, but a better source of pride is its serenity, its beauty, both natural and architectural, its fastidiousness. Other villages have been built; but Broadway seems to have grown. The grey stone houses have sprung from the soil, not less than the fruit trees, chiefly apple and plum, which surround it and in the spring weave a gossamer of blossoms all about it. Almost every house has some comeliness of

its own. Most are old and a few very old, and where modern additions have been made they have been made lovingly. These comely houses, like a border of herbaceous masonry, line either side of the road—a broad way indeed—for quite or nearly a mile of the turnpike from London to Worcester, the main street descending from the Cotswolds to the plain, which in a short time merges with the Vale of Evesham.

In a paper on Abbey, Alfred Parsons, and others of *Harper's* illustrators, printed in the magazine some time after the period we have now reached, but based upon earlier knowledge, Henry James began by extolling the fascination of Broadway; and his article, Abbey remarked in a letter at the time, "did not much help the privacy of the place." "A very old English village [wrote the novelist] lying among its meadows and hedges, in the very heart of the country, in a hollow of the green hills in Worcestershire, is responsible directly and indirectly for some of the most beautiful work in black-and-white with which I may concern myself here—that is, for much of the work of Mr. Abbey and Mr. Alfred Parsons. I do not mean to say that Broadway has told these gentlemen all they know (the name from which the American reader has to brush away an incongruous association, may as well be written first as last), for Mr. Parsons, in particular, who knows everything that can be known about English fields and flowers, would have good reason to insist that the measure of his large landscape art is a large experience. I would only suggest that if one loves Broadway and is familiar with it, and if a part of that predilection is that one has seen Mr. Abbey and Mr. Parsons at work there, the pleasant confusion takes place of itself; one's affection for the wide, long, grass-bordered vista of brownish grey cottages, thatched, latticed, mottled, mended, ivied, immemorial, grows with the sense of its having ministered to other minds and transferred itself to other recipients; just as the beauty of many a bit in many a drawing of the artists I have mentioned is enhanced by the sense, or at any rate by the desire, of recognition. Broadway and much of the land about it are, in short, the perfection of the old English rural tradition, and if they do not underlie *all* the combina-



"LIKE MY LORD PATELEY."

1885.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER," ACT II.

GOLDSMITH.

tions by which (in their pictorial accompaniments to rediscovered ballads, their vignettes to story or sonnet) these particular talents touch us almost to tears, we feel at least that they would have sufficed: they cover the scale. . . .

"In such places as Broadway, and it is part of the charm of them to American eyes, the sky looks down on almost as many things as the ceiling, and things are the joy of the illustrator. Furnished apartments are useful to the artist, but a furnished country is even more so. A ripe midland English region is a museum of accessories and specimens, and is sure, under any circumstances, to contain the article wanted. This is the great recommendation of Broadway: everything in it is convertible. Even the passing visitor finds himself becoming so; the place has so much character that it rubs off on him, and if in an old garden—an old garden with old gates and old walls and old summer-houses—he lies down on the old grass (on a venerable rug, no doubt), it is ten to one but he will be converted. The little oblong sheaves of blank paper with elastic straps are fluttering all over the place. There is portraiture in the air and composition in the very accidents. Everything is a subject or an effect, a 'bit' or a good thing. . . . It is delicious [Henry James adds in his own twinkling way] to be at Broadway and not to have to draw."

To-day (1919) the village is altered. There is now a railway station on the branch line between Honeybourne and Cheltenham; but the trains are little motor things that devise or communicate no evil. New houses may be seen, one of them belonging to Alfred Parsons, built in a field which he bought from Frank Millet, in order to be permanently his neighbour, only a short time before the *Titanic* disaster. Mr. Parsons's house, which stands in a lovely garden, every flower in which has received personal attention from his hands, is indigenous and is rapidly merging into the landscape. Of one or two of the other new buildings one cannot say the same; but taken as a whole Broadway may be said to have kept itself very pure in the thirty years that have intervened since Abbey was there. In addition to Alfred Parsons, another of his early friends, Mary Anderson, has made it her home.

"Abbey [Henry James wrote, and he was thinking in particular of the drawings for Herrick, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *Old Songs*] spurns the literal and yet superabounds in the characteristic, and if he makes the strange familiar, he makes the familiar just strange enough to be distinguished. Everything is so human, so humorous, and so caught in the act, so buttoned and petticoated and gartered, that it might be round the corner; and so it is; but the corner is the corner of another world. . . . From the first and always that other world and that qualifying medium, in which I have said that the human spectacle goes on, for Mr. Abbey have been a county of old England which is not to be found in any geography, though it borders, as I have hinted, on the Worcestershire Broadway. Few artistic phenomena are more curious than the congenital acquaintance of this perverse young Philadelphian with that mysterious locality. It is there that he finds them all—the nooks, the corners, the people, the clothes, the arbours and gardens and tea-houses, the queer courts of old inns, the sun-warmed angles of old parapets."

There is a slight exaggeration here, of course, for, as we know, Lechlade and Bidford-on-Avon contributed probably a larger share; but Broadway's place in Abbey's topography is important.

A letter to Charles Parsons on September 28th tells something of this first sojourn in the Worcestershire earthly paradise. "We are all busy as bees at Broadway. We've been quite a large colony. Gosse has been here for a month, and Sargent has been painting a great big picture in the garden of Barnard's two little girls in white lighting Chinese lanterns hung about among rose trees and lilies. It is seven feet by five, and as the effect only lasts about twenty minutes a day—just after sunset—the picture does not get on very fast. [This was the lovely "Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose," now in the Tate Gallery.] Millet is painting two interiors, Barnard is doing various sketches, and I've been painting a little water-colour of a corner of a very draughty church, and doing the everlasting *She Stoops* up. There are three models down from town, all eating their heads off to-day. We have lots of music—Sargent plays, and Miss Gertrude Griswold sings to us like an angel. We've had casual visits from An-

toinette Sterling and Henry Daniel, of Oxford. F. Anstey Guthrie is coming this week to stay with us awhile, and later on Austin Dobson. Can't you look in? Sargent and I paddled down from Oxford to Windsor and saw your cross-eyed young lady at Wallingford, who asked where the dear old gentleman with the glasses was. I imprinted a more or less chaste caress for you—on her alabaster brow." Mr. Anstey Guthrie's memories of this visit to Broadway comprise a model named Stewart, who claimed descent from the second Charles and had remarkably beautiful hands, then sitting to Abbey for *She Stoops to Conquer*. "I always," says the author of *Vice Versa*, in a letter to me, "remember Abbey's quiet, dry humour, his rich drawl and racy American idioms." The Rev. Henry Daniel, who died in 1919, was the Provost of Worcester College, the owner of the Daniel Press.

" Sargent [the letter continues] nearly killed himself at Pangbourne Weir. He dived off the same and struck a spike with his head, cutting a big gash in the top. It has healed wonderfully well, but it was a nasty rap. It was here that he saw the effect of the Chinese lanterns hung among the trees and the bed of lilies. . . . After his head was bound up he knocked it a second time and reopened the wound." Abbey was alarmed and took him to Broadway to look after him; and this was the painter's introduction to that place. Here, since it is Mr. Sargent's first appearance on the scene, it should be said that the American artist, who is now chiefly known for his portraits, although his true love is mural decoration, was, in 1885, only twenty-nine, being four years younger than Abbey. After having lived and studied abroad, exhibiting in the Salon, when he was a pupil of Carolus-Duran, as early as 1879, he had settled in England and was now on the threshold of one of the most brilliant careers in the history of art.

Writing to Reinhart in November from Farnham House, Abbey describes the daily life at Broadway in much the same terms as to Charles Parsons, but amplifies it here and there. Thus: " I've been daubing away with no light to speak of, taking long walks in the mud. But to-day [November 12th] it is beautiful. The hills are covered

with snow, and the whole colony, children and all, pranced over them in the sunlight this morning. We have music until the house won't stand it. Sargent is going elaborately through Wagner's trilogy, recitatives and all; there are moments when it doesn't seem as if it could be meant for music, but I dare say it is. I've been painting a head. Sargent does it better than I do and quicker, but then he's younger.

"Why," Abbey asks Reinhart in this November letter, "couldn't you come here for a while next summer? The country about is lovely and the houses are really fine architecturally—not 'cottagey' but with well-cut stone windows and doors." But the project, although it was seriously considered by the Reinharts, did not fructify.

Another guest this summer, Abbey tells Reinhart, was Henry James, and since so much has already been quoted from his urbane and mellow pen let a word be said of him at that time, especially as an intimacy was now beginning between him and Abbey which was to grow into a friendship that became stronger as the years proceeded. In 1885 Henry James was forty-two, by nine years Abbey's senior, and was already well-known as a novelist, a critic, and a most subtle and penetrating discerner of the souls of cities. He was at work at that time on his stories *The Bostonians* and *Princess Casamassima*, living in De Vere Mansions, Kensington (Rye was not yet discovered), and, as he ever did, delighting his country friends with visits all too rare and brief. From time to time as this book proceeds we shall find letters to Abbey from Henry James.

A letter from Abbey to Charles Parsons, about this time, has this: "A man named Cope Whitelour wants an electro of my Fingal's Cave cut, to publish by the side of Turner's drawing of the same subject, *in order to show how very bad the latter is!!* For heaven's sake, if he applies to headquarters, sit on him—I wouldn't be made a fool of like this for anything. . . . Caldecott," he adds, "will be in N.Y. by the same steamer that brings this. He is very ill—be good to him." Abbey also commended Caldecott to the care of his cousin, Mrs. Curtiss; but the hope of recovery was a forlorn one, and the artist died in Florida in 1886, just before his fortieth birthday. With him passed

away one of the most kindly and most charming of English draughtsmen, who not only was a master of the pencil but a sweetener of life and the adored friend of the nursery.

CHAPTER XVIII

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

1886 Aged 33–34

Abbey in New York—A London Welcome—J. R. Osgood—Howard Pyle—An Artist's Education—First Sight of Fairford—C. S. Reinhart—Henry James on Abbey—Austin Dobson's Prologue to *She Stoops to Conquer*—The Goldsmith Drawings

THE year 1886 yields but few materials to the biographer. In the early months Abbey was at Bedford Gardens working on the water-colour "Stony Ground," and upon the "March Past," which he sent to the Institute's Exhibition. "Stony Ground" he took in the early spring to New York, where he spent much time conferring with the Harpers as to future arrangements, the incentive being the following letter from Mr. Alden, an epoch-making document in Abbey's career. The date is February 18th, 1886: "We have long had in view some drawings from you illustrating characters and situations in Shakespeare's Comedies. The thought first took shape when I saw your drawing of Autolycus. I would like to have your name go down to posterity associated with Shakespeare! You would select your *motifs* at pleasure. No text would be needed beyond a simple legend, to accompany the drawings; but in time you would have enough to illustrate a sumptuous edition of the Comedies. You would not be bound to take one play at a time and confine yourself to it until it might become tiresome. How do you like the idea? The interest in Shakespeare is universal, and the final result of the scheme would probably prove more remunerative than of any other you could put your pencil to." Since it was from this suggestion that Abbey's Shakespeare drawings came into being we cannot be too grateful to Mr. Alden—but it is too soon to speak of this. Enough to say now that the tree of which the seed was thus planted was growing for the next twenty and more years.

We get a glimpse of Abbey on this visit to New York in the description of a Tile Club dinner, as given in *The Book of the Tile Club*,

MRS. HARDCASTLE, MISS NEVILLE AND TONY LUMPKIN.

MISS NEVILLE: "PRAY, AUNT, LET ME READ IT. NOBODY CAN READ A CRAMP HAND BETTER THAN I" (TWITCHING THE LETTER FROM HER).

1885.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER," ACT IV.

GOLDSMITH.

by "Edward Strahan" (Earl Shinn). He tells us that one evening the Tilers having gathered for dinner, Cadmium, an expert at a beefsteak, was bending above the tenderloin which was broiling on the gridiron over the glowing coals of the wood fire in the back room, while Polyphemus dropped in lumps of butter and certain mysteries. A brass kettle was singing on the anthracite fire in the front room. Mallard ducks were preparing in the kitchen. A silver chafing dish, in place upon the table, was ready to heat the oysters into a delicious brew, and, while thus concentrated, "they were somehow (says Shinn) suddenly aware that a new arrival had come among them. It was the Chestnut just popping in from a distance of three thousand miles to share their dinner. To betray any surprise, to extend any emphatic welcome to a comrade, simply because he was from abroad, was not in the humour of the Tile Club. One of their members was then in India, another in Spain, and Polyphemus was expecting a brother from Hayti.

"'Fellows,' said the Chestnut, 'I just came to tell you that I have had a real Cavalier saddle made by a saddler in Norfolk Street, just off the Strand. Hogskin, wooden pommels, stirrups like those in Vandyck's Charles I. Modelled after one of Prince Rupert's. Cost like the dickens, but I am so much in his debt already that I scarcely noticed the fellow's bill.'

"To say [the writer continues] that the Chestnut was a favourite with the Club would be to put it unfairly. There were a score of favourites—that being the number of the possible membership. A new arrival was not to be spoiled with mollycoddle or petting, but was to be used for what he could teach. The studio property he had just described was admired speculatively as a possible good, and those who expected to want to borrow it made him describe the saddle accurately, with sketches in burnt match executed on the tablecloth. Then the member from England was exhaustively cross-examined. News from du Maurier and Burne-Jones and Alma Tadema and Sargent were demanded and given with such graphic painter's minuteness that the listeners could fairly scent the varnish in the ateliers of those distant craftsmen. The Chestnut had come

over for a few days, in an almost accidental way, just to decide on the binding and title-page of his illustrated Beowulf. This done, he was to happen back again fortuitously. He was wanted for a grand phaeton tour among the Cumberland Lakes; in this projected excursion he would knock knees with the father of the *Princess of Thule*, the father of the *Scholar Gypsy*, and the book-keeper of a successful firm nick-named Triumphant Plutocracy. . . ."

The American visit was quickly over, and on May 7th a supper party met at 54 Bedford Gardens to welcome the wanderer back, the host being Alfred Parsons and the guests Alma Tadema, Marcus Stone, Luke Fildes, Boughton, Keene, Sambourne, J. L. Toole, Colin Hunter, William Black, R. W. Macbeth, Andrew Lang, and Henry James. One other guest was James R. Osgood, destined to be one of Abbey's best friends, who had just come to London, to 45 Albemarle Street, as a publisher on his own account, in partnership with the late Clarence MacIlvaine, and to represent Harpers' in England.

A letter from the American artist, the late Howard Pyle, of which the following is an extract, reached Abbey soon after his return to England: "What jolly times you must have in your English life, with the right fellows you meet at your club and elsewhere! I wonder whether two lives could be more different than yours and mine: the one full of go, novelty and change; the other humdrum, mossy, and —no, I will not say dull or stagnant, for it suits me to perfection. Yes, it suits me so perfectly that I doubt whether I shall ever cross the ocean to see those things which seem so beautiful and dream-like in my imagination, and which if I saw might break the bubble of fancy and leave nothing behind but bitter soap-suds. I have always had the most intense longing to see some of those jolly bits which you are always throwing out as sops to us less fortunate mortals—by the bye, *do* you see them, or do you only carry motives of them around in your 'nut,' the same as I do the old German castles?" It may be noted that Pyle's career and that of Abbey coincided very nearly in point of time, Abbey having been born on April 1st, 1852, Pyle on March 5th, 1853, Abbey dying on August 1st, 1911, Pyle on

MISS HARDCASTLE AND MARLOW.

ENTER HARDCASTLE AND SIR CHARLES FROM BEHIND.
SIR CHARLES : "HERE, BEHIND THIS SCREEN."

Nineteen inches by thirteen inches.

1885.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER," ACT V.

GOLDSMITH.

MISS HARDCASTLE, MARLOW, SIR CHARLES AND HARDCASTLE.

SIR CHARLES. "I CAN HOLD IT NO LONGER. CHARLES, CHARLES, HOW HAST THOU DECEIVED ME. IS THIS YOUR INDIFFERENCE, YOUR UNINTERESTING CONVERSATION!"

Seventeen and a half inches by twelve and a half inches.

1885.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER," ACT V.

GOLDSMITH.

November 9th in the same year; while both made reputations as illustrators for *Harper's Magazine*. To Pyle's letter Abbey wrote a reply, which, however, he never sent. As it is among his papers and has so much good sense in it, revealing so much of its writer's sane outlook and purposefulness, a few passages may be quoted: "If, as you say, you wax miserly of your time, don't waste any more of it trying to imagine what has already been imagined. Your German and Dutch castles are much less picturesque than they really are. One month in Nuremberg, Ghent, Middelburg, or any other North German Hanseatic town would open your eyes wider to the possibilities of your ability than twenty years' toiling through the translations of them other eyes have given you. You can't invent any more curious architecture of the period than exists in these old places. If you could you would be the greatest architect living today. The first fortnight I spent in England not a dozen miles from this spot [the letter was written at Broadway] made me wish back all the English drawings I had ever made. The country is as different from America as chalk is from cheese. When you sit down to do your work here, if it be of a certain period—anywhere after 1550—you unconsciously remember all that you have seen of architecture or dress of this particular time. This little village, of perhaps five hundred people, has, I dare say, only half a dozen houses built within the century, and they are built on the old lines handed down by their fathers. The casements in every house are leaded ones. Here are one or two drawings. I can't get it all in in a sketch these days. Our dear old Charles Keene manages to somehow—and Menzel. This latter is a perfect miracle of industry, drawing and sketching everything even now in his seventy-first year. . . .

"I am convinced that I am right about your coming over here. Do you really think a man is the worse for being surrounded by beautiful things? You can't possibly believe that his imagination is stimulated by ugly, or worse, commonplace things. You would save ten years in a month's travel over on this side. . . . I suppose I remember at least a hundred things that I shall not be aware of until they are severally wanted."

In June Abbey and Alfred Parsons, with Frank Millet, went over to Paris for the Salon, and there they found Reinhart and seem to have been very merry with him; and soon after their return Millet, Henry James, and Abbey took a little drive of exploration, of which this is an account, in a letter to Charles Parsons: "Frank and I have just come back from a long drive across country to Fairford, near the Thames, and a most enjoyable trip it was. Henry James, who has been staying with us for a few days, went along. We drove about seventy miles altogether, and on the second day went through the most primitive part of England I ever saw. We only saw a railway once in all this distance. There are some wonderfully beautiful things in the valley of the Coln. Few Americans have any notion, I fancy, of the great wealth of mediæval architecture there is scattered about in the remote villages of England. We passed through eighteen villages and small towns yesterday—nearly every one with an old church of more or less interest. There is at Burford a magnificent great abbey church full of splendid bits of Norman and early perpendicular work. At Stow-on-the-Wold we had the good fortune to happen on a wedding, which afforded us great delight. Some day you must come back to us and take one of these trips. These Cotswold Hills would brace you up, you may be sure."—The excursion to Fairford was more momentous than Abbey knew, for in 1890, after much search, it was at Fairford that he and Mrs. Abbey found the home which they were to occupy for many years and where he was to do his most important work.

A letter to Reinhart on October 2nd, 1886, tells more of Russell House at this time, and lends point to Mr. Dobson's recollection of it as "as jolly as a boys' school."—"As the evenings begin to lengthen and time hangs a little before bedtime, I begin to have stirrings within me that prompt me to think a little of what is going on elsewhere than within these walls. What, for instance, have you been about all these months, in fact since the night you so effectually curled us all up in the Café Americain? I dare say you are back again in Paree at work. We have so stunning a place here to do it in that we are not dreaming of any urban labours as yet. Sargent

"SALLY IN OUR ALLEY."

"Of all the days that's in the week
I dearly love but one day,
And that's the day that comes betwixt
A Saturday and Monday;
For then I'm drest in all my best
To walk abroad with Sally:
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley."

H. CAREY.

1886.

"OLD SONGS."

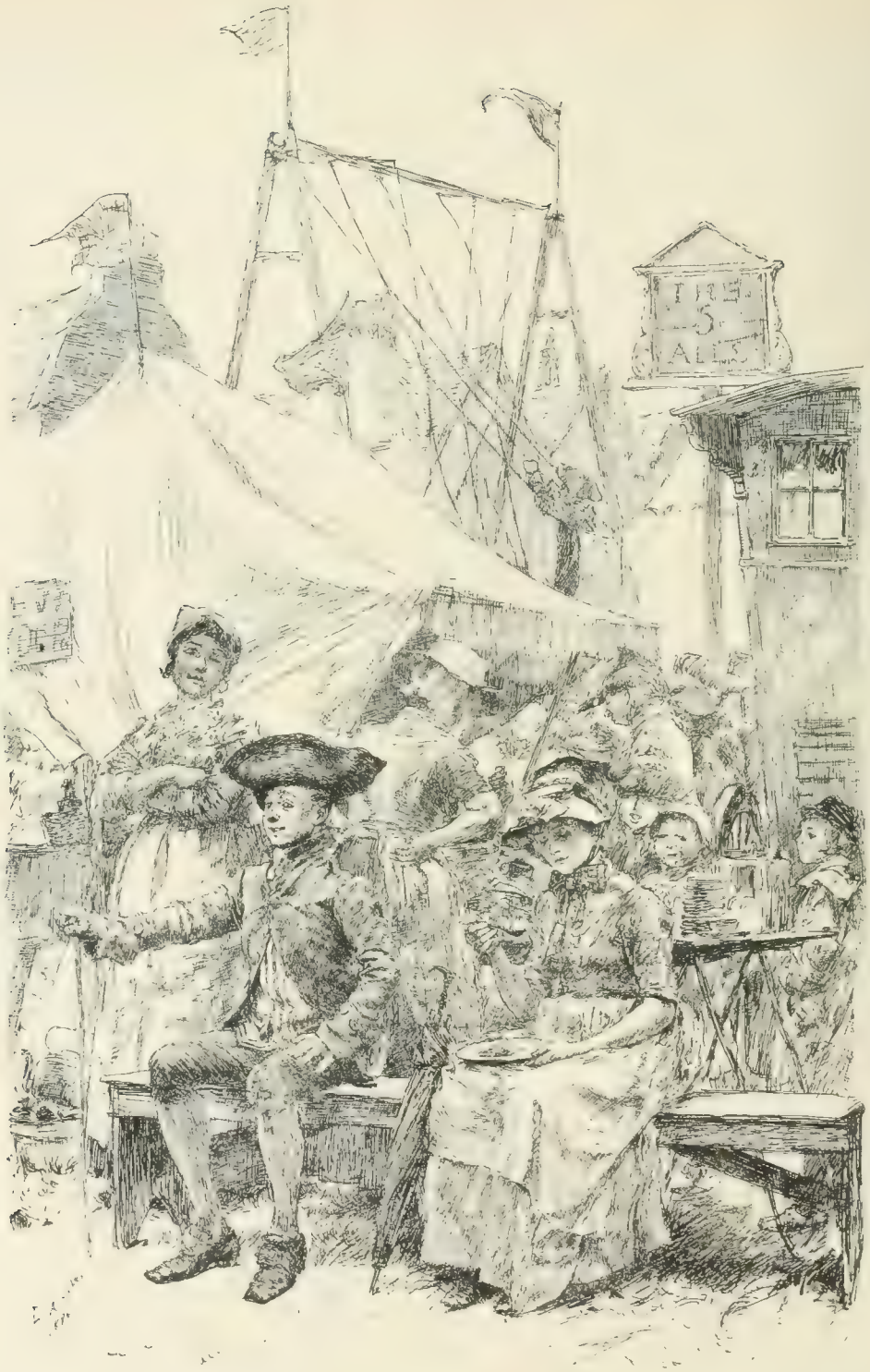
"SALLY IN OUR ALLEY."

"My master carries me to church,
And often am I blamed
Because I leave him in the lurch
As soon as text is named;
I leave the church in sermon-time
And slink away to Sally:
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley."

H. CAREY.

1886.

"OLD SONGS."



"SALLY IN OUR ALLEY."

"When Christmas comes about again,
Oh, then I shall have money;
I'll hoard it up and box it all,
I'll give it to my honey:
I would it were ten thousand pound,
I'd give it all to Sally:
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley."

H. CAREY.

1886.

"OLD SONGS."

indeed is thinking of town. I believe he has a sitting beginning on the 15th. He has almost finished his large picture of the children lighting lanterns hung among flowers—and has not begun anything else of importance this summer. We grew a great bed of poppies on purpose to paint, but it was too many for us, much the most intricate and puzzling affair I ever saw. I funked it entirely and gloated over the ineffectual struggles of Sargent, Millet, Alfred and Blashfield. The last [E.W. Blashfield, the American artist] has been staying at the inn most of the summer—a very nice companionable chap, with a most puzzling service—at tennis, I mean. I wish you could come over and see us for a time. We have lots of room, and I am sure you would find the place practicable. If you *must* work, there are four rooms we use as studios. One, the barn, is really fine—seventy feet long and wide in proportion. We have had it nicely floored and great glass doors put in, and now there is in process of construction an immense chimney which ought to warm it; and we are in negotiation with various dealers in antiquities for a chimney-piece for it.

"I haven't painted much, but have done several songs for H.B. [Harper Brothers] in black-and-white. I've several water-colours begun, but none of them near even the middle stage. I intend going on again pretty soon unless I succumb to the many alluring invitations to visit about, which at this time of year are rather numerous. We have really had a gay summer, pretending to work and sometimes working (for there are numberless places with easels in them to hide away in—if you really *do* want to work) until four, and then tennis until dinner time, and after dinner dancing and music and various cheering games in the studio—but mostly dancing."

January and February saw the completion of the drawings for *She Stoops to Conquer*, which had been running irregularly through *Harper's* since December, 1884. With the number for August, 1886, the publication of the series was finished, and in the December number the "Old Songs" made a brave beginning with "Sally in our Alley." Although Goldsmith's play was not issued in book form until the following year, this is an excellent place to say something

of it, especially as here, at the end of 1886, the first serious examination of Abbey's genius which had been printed may most fittingly be quoted. The writer was Henry James. The article, from which an extract has already been made in Chapter III., appeared in *Harper's Weekly* in December, 1886. We will begin with some general conclusions. Thus: "Impeccable as he is in drawing, he likes a whole face, with reason, and likes a whole figure; the latter not to the exclusion of clothes, in which he delights, but as the clothes of our great-grandfathers helped it to be seen. No one has ever understood breeches and stockings better than he, or the human leg, that delight of the draughtsman as the costume of the last century permitted it to be known. The petticoat and bodice of the same period have as little mystery for him, and his women and girls have altogether the poetry of a by-gone manner and fashion. They are not modern heroines, with modern nerves and accomplishments, but figures of remembered song and story, calling up visions of spinet and harpsichord that have lost their music to-day, high-walled gardens that have ceased to bloom, flowered stuffs that are faded, locks of hair that are lost, love-letters that are pale. By which I don't mean that they are vague and spectral, for Mr. Abbey has in the highest degree the art of imparting life. . . .

"His drawing is the drawing of direct, immediate, solicitous study of the particular case, without tricks or affectations or any sort of cheap subterfuge, and nothing can exceed the charm of its delicacy, accuracy and elegance, its variety and freedom, and clear, frank solution of difficulties. If for the artist it is the foundation of every joy to know exactly what he wants (as I hold it is indeed), Mr. Abbey is, to all appearance, to be constantly congratulated. . . .

"If the writer speaks when he writes, and the draughtsman speaks when he draws, Mr. Abbey, in expressing himself with his pencil, certainly speaks pure English. He reminds us to a certain extent of Meissonier, especially the Meissonier of the illustrations to that charming little volume of the *Contes Remois*, and the comparison is highly to his advantage in the matter of freedom, variety, ability to represent movement (Meissonier's figures are stock-still), and facial

expression—above all, in the handling of the female personage, so rarely attempted by the French artist. But he differs from the latter signally in the fact that, though he shares his sympathy as to period and costume, his people are of another race and tradition, and move in a world locally altogether different. Mr. Abbey is still young, he is full of ideas and intentions, and the work he has done may, in view of his time of life, of his opportunities, and the singular completeness of his talent, be regarded really as a kind of foretaste and prelude. It can hardly fail that he will do better things still, when everything is so favourable. Life itself is his subject, and that is always at his door. The only obstacle, therefore, that can be imagined in Mr. Abbey's future career is a possible embarrassment as to what to choose. He has hitherto chosen so well, however, that this obstacle will probably not be insuperable."

When, some time later, *She Stoops to Conquer* was published in a handsome folio, it had an introduction in couplets by Mr. Dobson, and decorations by Alfred Parsons, and was altogether a sumptuous, delectable work—"monumental," as Mr. Pennell calls it. Mr. Dobson's verses are well known, but a few lines will indicate how happy a chance had brought this poet and this illustrator together as allies in the reconstruction of Goldsmith's day:

"Look, look,—there is Wilkes! You may tell by the squint;
But he grows every day more and more like the print
(Ah! Hogarth could draw!); and behind, at the back,
Hugh Kelly, who looks all the blacker in black.
That is Cumberland next, and the prim-looking person
In the corner, I fancy, is Ossian Macpherson.
And, rolling and blinking, here, too, with the rest,
Comes sturdy old Johnson, dressed out in his best;
How he shakes his old noddle! I'd wager a crown,
Whatever the law is, *he's* laying it down!
Beside him is Reynolds,—who's deaf; and the hale,
Fresh, farmer-like fellow, I take it, is Thrale.
There is Burke, with George Steevens. And somewhere, no doubt,
Is the author, too nervous just now to come out;

He's a queer little fellow, grave-featured, pock-pitten,
Tho' they say, in his cups, he's as gay as a kitten."

The drawings from *She Stoops to Conquer* are too well established among black-and-white masterpieces for their praise to be elaborated now; and some of them are to be found and studied in the present volume. But the eulogy of the artist from the golden pen of Henry James, in the article of which other portions have already been given (the occasion being the completion of the illustrations in the magazine), demands quotation: "No work in black-and-white in our time has been more truly artistic and certainly no success more unqualified. The artist has given us a complete evocation of a social state to its smallest details, and done it with an unsurpassable lightness of touch. The problem was in itself delightful —the accidents and incidents (granted a situation *de comédie*) of an old, rambling, wainscotted, out-of-the-way English country house, in the age of Goldsmith. Here Mr. Abbey is in his element—given up equally to unerring observation and still more infallible divination. The whole place, and the figures that come and go in it, live again, with their individual look, their peculiarities, their special signs and oddities. The spirit of the dramatist has passed completely into the artist's sense, but the spirit of the historian has done so almost as much. Tony Lumpkin is, as we say nowadays, a document, and Miss Hardcastle embodies the results of research. Delightful are the humour and quaintness and grace of all this, delightful the variety and the richness of personal characterisation, and delightful, above all, the drawing. It is impossible to represent with such vividness unless, to begin with, one sees; and it is impossible to see unless one wants to very much, or unless, in other words, one has a great love.

"Mr. Abbey has evidently the tenderest affection for just the old house and the old things, the old faces and voices, the whole irrevocable human scene which the genial hand of Goldsmith has passed over to him, and there is no inquiry about them that he is not in a position to answer. He is intimate with the buttons of coats and the buckles of shoes; he knows not only exactly what his people wore, but exactly how they wore it, and how they felt when they had

TONY : " TONY LUMPKIN IS HIS OWN MAN AGAIN."

1886.

" SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER," ACT V.

GOLDSMITH.

MRS. HARDCASTLE, MISS NEVILLE, TONY AND HASTINGS.

TONY : " DON'T MIND HER. LET HER CRY. IT'S THE COMFORT OF HER HEART. I HAVE SEEN HER AND SISTER CRY OVER A BOOK FOR AN HOUR TOGETHER, AND THEY SAID THEY LIKED THE BOOK THE BETTER THE MORE IT MADE THEM CRY."

Fifteen inches by eleven and a half inches.

1885.

" SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER," ACT II.

GOLDSMITH.

it on. He has sat on the old chairs and sofas, and rubbed against the old wainscot, and leaned over the old banisters. He knows every mended place in Tony Lumpkin's stockings, and exactly how that ingenuous youth leaned back on the spinet, with his thick, familiar thumb out, when he presented his inimitable countenance, with a grin, to Mr. Hastings, after he had set his fond mother a-whimpering. (There is nothing in the whole series, by the way, better indicated than the exquisitely simple, half-bumpkin, half-vulgar expression of Tony's countenance and smile in this scene, unless it be the charming, arch, yet modest, face of Miss Hardcastle, lighted by the candle she carries, as, still holding the door by which she comes in, she is challenged by young Marlow to relieve his bewilderment as to where he really is and what *she* really is.) In short, if we have all seen *She Stoops to Conquer* acted, Mr. Abbey has had the better fortune of seeing it off the stage; and it is noticeable how happily he has steered clear of the danger of making his people theatrical types—mere masqueraders and wearers of properties. This is especially the case with his women, who had not a hint of the conventional paint and patches, simpering with their hands in the pockets of aprons, but are taken from the same originals from which Goldsmith took them."

That article was published on December 4th, and thus prepared the way for the exhibition of the original drawings held at the Grolier Club in New York from December 16th to December 22nd, which was the first opportunity that the public, even in so limited a way, had of studying Abbey's work at first hand.

The following undated letter from Henry James may be inserted here, since it touches again upon *She Stoops to Conquer*, although it belongs to a later year:

"November 12th.

"My dear Abbey,

"Three or four days ago arrived the good Natorp bearing wondrous gifts (from you) in his hands—offerings of splendid, indeed almost incredible, beauty. You do things more handsomely than anyone I know—and it is only because I have had the printer's devil at my heels these last days that I have delayed so many hours to tell you so. The books are beautiful and honourable exceedingly, the

sentiment which prompted the bestowal of them is exactly the same quality, and my gratitude and appreciation are altogether to match. They are the sort of thing that one will cherish and exhibit for ever —it is really very nice of you. What a fine thing is the Goldsmith— it makes one, as an American, hold up one's head much higher. I envy you having a hand in such occurrences. It is really a noble book. I am very glad to see the Herrick—it is very interesting for one studying the 'evolution' of your genius; and if (as I understood you once) many of the drawings were done before you visited these realms, it is a striking proof of that mystic vision—you would have invented old England if it hadn't existed. But who could have invented you?—in the same case. Fortunately you exist—though not so much in London as one would like. Aren't you coming back soon for the happy time as this is to me? Your two books make me ashamed of that wretched, vague, little article I wrote about you a year ago; and yet, bad as it is, the mania for publicity is the curse of our vulgar age. Herrick or Goldsmith wouldn't have done it—and that is why I love you—that you transport one so perfectly to uninteroceaning times—that is, they had no interviewers.

"Ever your very faithful,

"HENRY JAMES."

Among the *Narrative and Legendary Poems* of J. G. Whittier is a sequence of four sonnets, written in 1886, under the title "Banished from Massachusetts," with these words at the head: "On a painting by E. A. Abbey. The General Court of Massachusetts enacted, October 19th, 1658, that 'any person or persons of the cursed sect of Quakers' should, on conviction of the same, be banished on pain of death, from the jurisdiction of the commonwealth." Search has not yet revealed the pictorial source of the poet's inspiration; but the probability is that what Whittier saw and remembered was not a painting but a black-and-white drawing.

WITH JOCKEY TO THE FAIR.

"Soon did they meet a joyful throng
Their gay companions, blithe and young,
Each joins the dance, each joins the song
To hail the happy pair."

Fourteen inches by ten and a quarter inches.

1887.

"OLD SONGS."

CHAPTER XIX

THE COMMISSION FOR THE *COMEDIES* AND PUBLICATION OF *OLD SONGS*

1887–1888 Aged 34–36

The Sketching Club—Fred Barnard—Responsibilities of an Illustrator of Shakespeare—Theories of Illustration—Authors and their Illustrators—Sir Walter Besant—Charles Keene—Preparations for Shakespeare—An Italian Journey—A New Studio—A First London Exhibition—*Old Songs*—John Hay—George du Maurier

LETTERS are again very scarce in 1887. The first, from 54 Bedford Gardens to Charles Parsons, on February 2nd, tells us of the Sketching Club. "It has begun," Abbey says, "its weekly dinners, and I am seeing more than I did of the interiors of studios. We dine at each other's houses in succession. Last Monday at Hunter's there were Pettie and Holl, Macbeth, Mac Whirter, Gregory, Tom Graham, Murray and Alfred and I—and we hauled Hunter's work all to pieces, of course. It is very good, however: the usual Tarbert shore with girls shrimping, etc. We sketch a given subject after dinner in the good old style. This club, however, has a right to an old style, as it was started in Edinburgh nearly fifty years ago."—The Club consisted, in 1887, of I cannot say how many members, but the most enthusiastic and regular were Abbey himself, Colin Hunter, R. W. Macbeth, C. E. Johnson, P. R. Morris, H. Cameron, E. J. Gregory, John Burr, C. E. Holloway, Frank Holl, T. Graham, J. Pettie, W. Q. Orchardson, H. Harper, Cecil Lawson, Alfred Parsons and J. MacWhirter. Alfred Parsons has some of the Sketching Club's drawings made on a night when the subject was "Our Daily Bread." Abbey drew four cobblers at work on a bench; Pettie and Gregory were more literal and introduced the staff of life itself. For MacWhirter, by the way, Abbey designed in 1887 a private-view card for an exhibition at the Fine Art Society's—"The Land of Burns and Scott." "If," MacWhirter wrote, when reminding Abbey of his promise to do him this friendly service, "by a stroke

of extra genius you could introduce a Scotch thistle into the design, so much the better." The stroke of extra genius was forthcoming. And here let me mention the menu card for the "Kinsmen" which Abbey made, also in 1887, in collaboration with Linley Sambourne. One would hardly have expected two such different styles—the fluid and the solid, as one might say—to amalgamate; but they do. Abbey was pleased with the result. Writing to Reinhart, he said, paraphrasing a slang expressive phrase of the day—"to take the biscuit"—"Sambourne and I have done a combination menu card which removes the macaroon." The letter of February 2nd also says: "I wish you'd send Barnard something to do. He is a proud cuss, and will neither go to publishers and ask for work nor suggest any ideas for any, and his wife and children are too charming to be left badly off. Can't you start some of those London characters? I suggested that he do a 'Punch and Judy' show in Oxford Street as a page on spec." A possible result of this appeal was the article by F. Anstey in the magazine for April, 1888, on "Humours of a Minor Theatre," with Barnard's drawings.

Abbey's letter next turns to questions of *The Quiet Life* and *Old Songs*, on which Alfred Parsons and he were engaged, and, referring to the "Leather Bottel," mentions a correspondence on that song with the late Rev. J. W. Ebsworth, who was President of the Ballad Society and a clerk in Holy Orders of rather notable eccentricity. He was an admirer of Abbey, says the letter, "of the deepest dye. I'd send the poem he has written to me but for my blushes."

What Abbey then hesitated to do I may adventure now. Ebsworth had written as follows concerning some recent drawings: "I had been, this evening, again looking through your *Harper's* illustrations of *She Stoops to Conquer* and liking them ever more and more. But I think your 'At Last,' and the entire series of 'Sally in our Alley,' from the introduction of the heroine on the doorstep (which Randolph Caldecott would have loved) to the glimpse of happiness in the final banqueting scene, to be absolutely perfect." Having gone so far in prose, the reverend gentleman dropped into verse. I quote one stanza:

MISS HARDCASTLE'S SONG.

"AH ME! WHEN SHALL I MARRY ME?"

Ten and a half inches by six and three-quarter inches.

1885.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER," BETWEEN ACTS III AND IV.

GOLDSMITH.

"The world had grown sordid and shabby,
But there came from across the big main
One to cheer the worn hearts, Edwin Abbey,
Who fills life with enjoyment again.
His the fancy, brisk, varied, and loving,
His the pencil, with lightness and grace,
To bring back what Old Time was removing—
Pluck the veil from Joy's long-hidden face."

"I want," Abbey continued, "the page of the new series [*The Quiet Life* and *Old Songs*] to have the open, delicate look that the song and drawing of 'Oh me! when shall I marry me?' have in the *She Stoops* book. 'The Wish' has that look." The artist did not always get his way (artists, when editors are in question, notoriously do not); but these letters are a sufficient testimony to Abbey's controlling desire to have everything as it should be. A further passage bears upon thoroughness of another kind, for, referring to "A Love Song," by Wither, for *Old Songs*, which Mr. Charles Parsons had thought somewhat recondite for the magazine, he says: "It is to be found in Ritson and in a very little and very rare book (where it *first* appeared) entitled 'A Description of Love,' with certain epigrams, elegies, and sonnets, London, 1620. Of course it is in Russell Smith's edition of Wither."

The letter, from which so many quotations have been made, was written on February 2nd, 1887. Abbey's next, also to Charles Parsons, and from Broadway, dated September 1st, in the same year, is of great importance, because it first tells of his serious intention to take up Mr. Alden's suggestion of the previous year and illustrate the comedies of Shakespeare. "Alfred's illness has kept me from doing many things I otherwise should have done. I have been waiting about for his recovery (which now, I am glad to say, is imminent), but in the meantime I have done very little to justify my artistic existence. We had plans for work this summer in which he was so much mixed up that I could not go on without him. We were to have finished the 'Quiet Life' series . . . and then we were to have set about the 'Walton' in earnest. *Now* these must both go over, and

talking it all over with him the other day, the 'Walton' offers more and more difficulties in the text. I can't see how it is to be cut, expurgated, or Bowdlerised without serious detriment to the innocence of the whole work, and I am pretty well discouraged about it. I have done two or three drawings for it already, and sketched three or four more, but I am half disposed to give it all up, at least for the present." As a matter of fact the project had to be abandoned. *The Compleat Angler*, illustrated by Edwin A. Abbey and Alfred Parsons, thus takes its place among "the books which might have been," beside (to name only one or two on those delectable phantom shelves) R.L. Stevenson's *Great North Road*, a romance of highwaymen, and the memoirs of the Duke of Wellington and William Hazlitt from the same hand.

We come now to the Shakespeare project; and particular attention is due to the letter for revelation of the clarity of Abbey's mind with regard to his work and his duty as an illustrator, and of the businesslike sense of him. "I have been thinking [he says] a great deal of the Shakespeare Comedies scheme, which at the beginning seemed to me utterly out of the question. So many people have suggested Shakespeare to me, that familiarity with the idea has, I dare say, shorn it of some of its terrors, although at the present I haven't the means to carry it out. . . There are fourteen Comedies, and I dare say you will not want more than five drawings to each one; and the research required would be rather a formidable affair, but I don't particularly mind that. Many of the difficulties with which I had to contend in *She Stoops* would not present themselves. I should like to know particularly whether it would pay me to undertake this. (We are so very mercenary.) In the case of the Comedies the scenes of which are laid in Verona, Venice, Padua, Tuscany, etc., I should like to go to these places, which I have never seen, and work up some studies there. This would be an expense. No greater, however, than the expenses attending my visit to that confounded Denmark, which profited me nothing.

"I don't believe in undertaking more than an average of five drawings to each Comedy—some might have six and some four—but if

"SWEET NELLY, MY HEART'S DELIGHT!"

Twenty inches by fourteen inches.

1887.

"OLD SONGS."

One of three drawings with the same title, two published in the book of "Old Songs" and one published privately.

there were more, the same difficulties that beset me in *She Stoops* —that of keeping the same faces and figures repeated accurately— would arise again. But, at any rate, I should like to have your views, and the views of the House, as to some plan of publication. The labour attending the preparation of these drawings would, of course, be considerable, and I am naturally anxious to know if the profits— the possible or probable profits—would justify me in undertaking the work. The more I learn, the more I see, and, naturally, the more fastidious I am as to the work I put forth. My library has increased to a greatly embarrassing extent since I began to get together material for my 'Herrick,' but even now I should feel justified in spending a considerable sum upon works of reference before beginning these drawings.

"*And*

"If you still think the work is to be undertaken, please let me know definitely how much I would receive in money for the drawings. I should not like to charge any expenses to the House—I mean in case I went abroad—and for the books and costumes, etc., but I should naturally be put to expenses of this sort, and I 'want to know, don't you know,' whether I could afford to do the book. I have been interrupted a good deal since I began this, and I dare say there is a deal of repetition in it, but the facts are here."

Thus far Abbey wrote on September 1st. He did not, however, send the letter then, but added to it in London: "September 12th. —Am I *never* to get at this? I have been so busy with other things since Thursday last (when I came up to see some of the last rehearsals and the first performance of the *Winter's Tale*) that I've had no moment to myself. I have profited much by this *Winter's Tale* experience, and——

"October 2nd.—(It's *got* to be finished this time). I don't remember 'and' what, but, at any rate, my mind has been much occupied with these Comedies, and I am becoming convinced that I might do them as well as most people, if not better. . . . Some of the plays would be very easy to get up, but some of them would be expensive. *As You Like It*, for instance, would cost me for clothes quite £60,

and most of the others (with the exception of the classic ones) more, or less. I have just laid out nearly £40 in books on costumes and architecture, so that *that* expense is over. Please let me know what you think, and what the House thinks of it all."

The House thought sufficiently well of it all to complete the contract, which was for an average of seven pages for each of the fourteen Comedies, or one hundred and thirty-two drawings in all, at 125 dollars per page, the drawings to be the property of the Messrs. Harpers. We may think, therefore, of Abbey henceforth for several years as rarely out of the company of our greatest poet, at whose birthplace he had first become acquainted with English life; and never without one or other of the plays in his pocket. All these little volumes have been preserved—the Rev. John Hunter's edition, published by Messrs. Longmans—and each is copiously marked, and in many of them are scribblings of drawing. Abbey's library editions of Shakespeare yield similar testimony to devout study.

The long letter quoted above is peculiarly interesting in showing us with what earnestness Abbey came to his tasks. Among a variety of unfinished and very rough notes from his pen which have been preserved are to be found, under the date 1894, further remarks on the theory of illustration that may with propriety be interpolated here. Charles Dudley Warner, taking advantage of the opening of du Maurier's *Trilby*, with drawings by the author, in *Harper's Magazine*, had written a little essay on illustrators, with some of which Abbey disagreed so heartily that he began to frame a reply. From this reply, which was neither completed nor sent, much relevant matter may be quoted. "It is only natural [Abbey wrote] for an author to suppose or assume that the article illustrated is, as a rule, better than the illustrations. Of course, there are two opinions as to this. One would hesitate to say that Walker's illustrations to *Philip* were better than the story, but I am not sure that a temperate mind, able to judge of both, would not admit that it was an open question. Certainly Millais' pictures to *Orley Farm* are better, artistically, than the novel, and the five hundred illustrations of the life of Frederick the Great, by Adolph Menzel, give the happy possessor of the col-

"HARVEST HOME."

"Come, Roger and Nell;
Come, Simkin and Bell;
Each lad with his lass hither come,
With singing and dancing.
In pleasure advancing
To celebrate harvest-home.
'Tis Ceres bids play
And keep holiday
To celebrate harvest-home."

1887.

"OLD SONGS."

lection a far clearer idea of the subject than the turgid and unnecessary text of Francis Kügler, by which they are accompanied. . . .

"Take the case again of the historical picture! If the right man (always supposing that the editor is sufficiently familiar with the work of contemporary artists to know which particular one knows best the particular historical period called for. I admit that this is difficult, for the editor, who, not having studied the period himself, other than in a literary way, cannot be expected to know the historical periods of furniture or clothing by their 'shapes,' but I am not pretending that the ideal pictorial editor exists. I am merely pointing out what might exist)—if the right man is found, one who knows, say, the period of the middle of the seventeenth century, in Holland, for instance, he would have to work upon, possibly, a subject like this:

The officer, entering suddenly, discovered the family quietly seated at their midday meal.

" Nothing is said of the uniform of the officer—of the fact that the matron of the family has her hair smoothly drawn back and done into a small knob at the back of her head, which is covered by a small round cap like a black muffin ring, having two three-corner tabs coming down over her ears, the whole covered by another cap of white lace, stiffened and turned back in front, in the form of a half moon, to show her bare forehead, and tied at the back with a drawing string; that her black dress is cut low upon the shoulder, with wide short sleeves coming below the elbow, with narrow plaits at the top and bottom, a full, white undersleeve gathered into a small wristband showing beneath it, etc., etc.—(the artist must also know just exactly what is implied by 'etc., etc.') —that she wears a full round skirt, pulled up and pinned front and back, so that the folds fall in a point behind and before, showing a petticoat of perhaps satin, or some figured stuff (he must know the pattern), with two rows of braid close round the bottom, and two up the front, low shoes with box toes coming out beyond the thick clumped sole, the outer sole of which has one thick piece of leather following the shape of the sole and covering the front of the heel as well as the bottom of it. She has a double collar on, wide open at the neck, both upper and

lower collar being sewn into a broad, stiff band. She has an apron (describe apron), earrings, and a bag at her side with bunch of keys (the kind of keys), etc., etc.

"The artist must know what that officer wore and how he wore it, the shape of each little detail of it; what the father of the family wore; whether he would be likely to wear his hat at meals; if so whether he was sufficiently high in station to wear a big hat or a conical hat, with a narrow rim; whether these would be felt hats or hats covered with beaver cloth or fur. He must know the shape of every article of furniture in the room. If they are an old-fashioned family he must allow for that and make the furniture of an earlier date. He must know that the rafters of the room would show, that it would be a high-ceiled room. He must know what their midday meal consisted of and the shapes of the things they ate and drank out of.

"He must know forty other things besides, that he hadn't allowed for when he sat down to make the drawing, and he must frequently get many of these things made up, if he can't borrow anything. If he doesn't take all these pains, or happen to have taken them, or crammed himself with this particular knowledge, he has the assurance that the first time he goes into his club, after the drawing has appeared, a man will say to him, 'That birdcage in your drawing this month won't do. You got that so-and-so, and it is one made fifty years later for such a man, etc., etc.' This may happen to be the one item of knowledge this particular man has to boast of, but if an illustrator has any pride in his work—and I am not troubling myself about the hangers-on who have not—he is exceedingly ashamed of his birdcage. . . .

"I do not believe that authors, as a rule, see very clearly their characters—that is, pictorially. I had to make a couple of drawings once for a story, and, as the story was rather nebulous, I called upon the authoress, hoping thus to get some inkling as to the appearance of the characters, but she had no clear idea in her head as to what they looked like, or would have been likely to wear, or anything at all about them that was of service to me. I supposed she would say,

"SUNBURNED FOLK THAT STAND AT GAZE."

1889.

"THE QUIET LIFE."

QUINCE.

" An upright man, who studied Greek,
And liked to see his friends around him.
Asylums, hospitals and schools
He used to swear were made to cozen ;
All who subscribed to them were fools—
And he subscribed to half a dozen."

W. M. PRAED.

1887.

" THE QUIET LIFE."

of course, when I showed her one drawing, that they were 'not like *that*,' but I was disappointed even there. She even went the length of saying that she should think *that* must have been very much like them.

"Fildes told me once that he had great difficulty in persuading Dickens that it would be impossible to make a drawing of John Jasper in *Edwin Drood* climbing a narrow winding stair in the pitch dark with a black scarf in his hand; and it has frequently happened to me, and I am sure to other illustrators, to find that authors have some arbitrary and absolutely impracticable idea that they wish carried out in a drawing."

A letter from the late Walter Besant,* the novelist and historian of London, dated September 11, 1887, throws further light on Abbey's desire for such thoroughness as he here describes. The question answered arose out of his work upon *She Stoops to Conquer:*

"I have looked into the tea question, and I find that between 1730 and 1770 a great change came over the country. You will find in one of the little tracts that I send with this the story of a pound of tea sent into the country about the former date. But at the latter date I find by the *Spiritual Quixote*, 1774, tea taken all over the country, for breakfast as well as in the evening, except, no doubt, in very out-of-the-way places. Some ladies took sage tea—made with sage, balm, rue, mint, and pennyroyal—delicious! The working man had onion posset or a basin of pot liquor, a bacon bone, and 'soft' cheese. They also loved a tankard of strong ale when they could get it.

"I am now sure that Oliver Goldsmith meant Olivia to have tea."

There came to Abbey, soon after, a letter from a somewhat unproductive correspondent, Charles Keene.

"239 King's Road, Chelsea,
"October 5th. [1887]

"DEAR ABBEY,

"Your and Millet's kind invitation is most tempting, but I've just had my holiday!—such a long one for me that I'm still astonished

* Mention of Besant recalls the circumstance that Abbey was an original member of the Rabelais Club, of which the novelist was the founder, with Mr. Walter Herries Pollock and Professor E. H. Palmer.

and feel sort o' guilty about it! I came back on Saturday last. Most of the time I was in Argyllshire near Oban (saw Black . . .), a land of storm (bucketing rain) and mists and floods, but in fairish weather of a beauty that more than compensates. I was staying with A. Stevenson (Arts Club)—I should like to introduce you to him—in a costly sort of house perched on a rock jutting into a seal-infested loch, trees down to water edge. Loch twenty miles long, scarred mountains all round. Went to the Gathering at Oban. Kilted chieftains, bagpiping 'Wild and high.' I left this paradise about a week ago and after a few days with a friend in 'canny Newcassel,' here I am... What antiquities about where you are? Any graves to grub up? —I'm dead on flint implements. I have not bagged much this year in my northern tour. A friend who wanted me to go to Suffolk with him picked up two beauties in a ploughed field that I know well down there. He gave them to me, so we're still on good terms! Did you say you had not been hard at work? Nor I! If I come I'll walk over. How many hours from Evesham station?

"Yours ever,

"CHARLES S. KEENE."

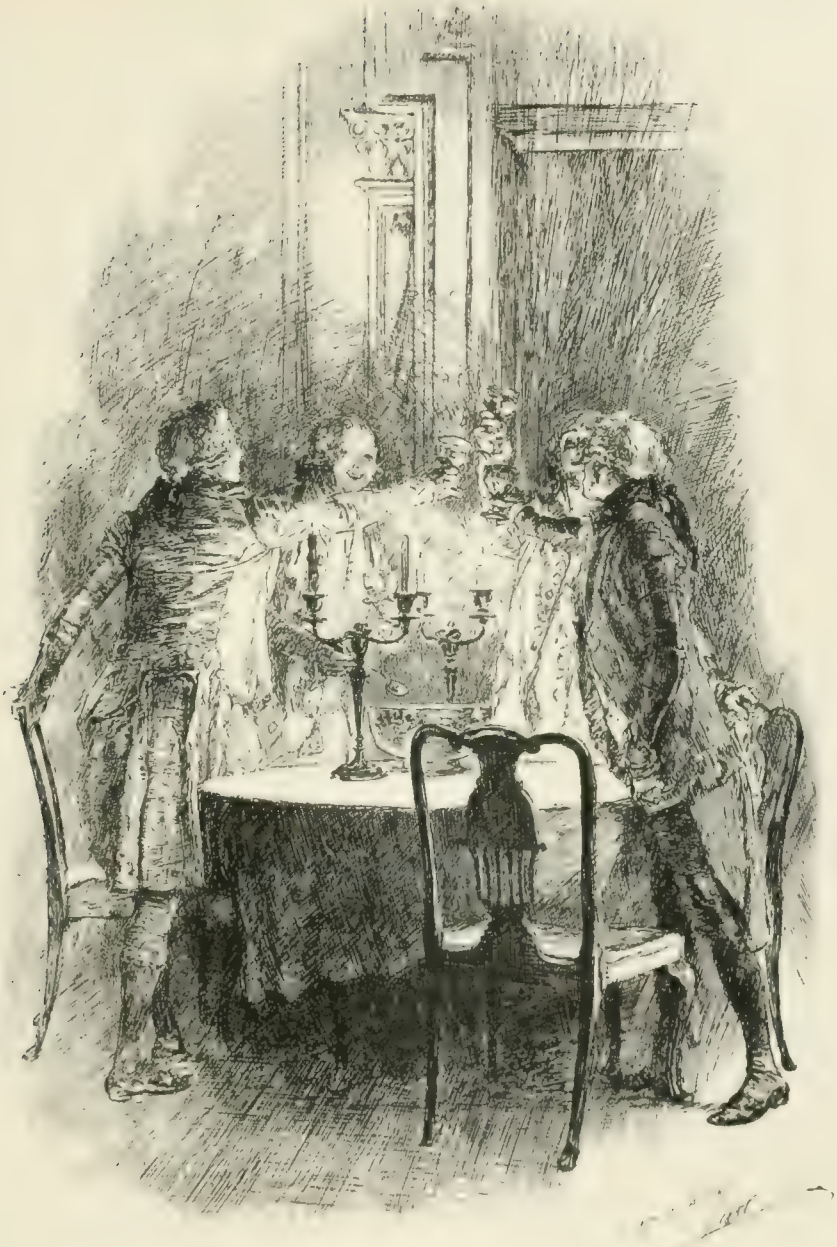
Writing to Reinhart in November Abbey indicates that the Shakespeare work was becoming absorbing: "I am about beginning a long series of drawings—some 150—to illustrate Shakespeare's Comedies, and have accrued to myself books and things galore on the 'Middle Ages.' How the dickens do the French get up such expensive books? Who buys them? I have expended nearly £100 in books alone since I've been studying this thing—eighteen expensive volumes of Viollet-le-Duc, besides Racinet, Lacroix, and Belgian things no end. I am making a good many dresses here in England, and am getting those iron castings of arms and so on from Berlin, but I find that with fourteen Comedies to mount, ruin will overtake me before I begin a single drawing. Most of the theatres here have mounted Shakespeare's plays in the Elizabethan fashion. Not a single play is laid by the author in that period, and only one—'The Merry Wives' (King Henry VIII.)—is laid in England. There

"HERE'S TO THE MAIDEN OF BASHFUL FIFTEEN."

"Let the toast pass
Drink to the lass;
I warrant she'll prove
An excuse for the glass."

1888.

"OLD SONGS."



must be some costume place in Paris, where Melingue and Paul Laurens get their things from, where there is a stock of Renaissance stuff. Do you know of one or two? The furniture I shall have knocked up by the property man at the Lyceum. He is a very clever chap, and the cost is trifling—papier maché and deal, but there isn't much furniture needed—they hadn't much before 1450. The dukes ceased to be reigning personages about then. If you can tell me that there *is* a shop where the dresses can be seen I'll run over and see them—about Christmas time."

The last letter of 1887 is to Charles Parsons, from Broadway, on December 1st. After confessing to an idle autumn, and asking Parsons to see two pictures by Frank Millet that had just gone over to New York, with a view to using an engraving of one or both in the *Magazine* or *Weekly*, Abbey said: "I began painting with great vigour this summer, but was obliged to desist through lack of cash. . . I am getting very excited about it [the "Shakespeare"] and am studying up the dresses and architecture, and trust really to send you serious things. I shudder at the money I've spent on books and so on. *That sort* of book seems to be disgustingly expensive. Offers of help, however, are coming in from all quarters—some of my 'managerial' friends having made very kind offers of assistance. . . I want to get enough cash saved by the first of March to get me down into Italy for a couple of months. I wish you could come over and go too. . . ."

Alfred Parsons's notes tell us that in 1887 Abbey divided his time between London—the major part of it—and Broadway, and paid several short visits to Frome, where Mr. Parsons, who was in poor health, spent some months. In September they visited the Jubilee Exhibition of pictures at Manchester, and then returned together to Broadway, to remain there until just before Christmas, working all the while on *The Quiet Life* and *Old Songs*, which in the meantime were running in the magazine. Abbey also had in the March number a frontispiece consisting of an engraving of his monochrome drawing "The Day of Rest."

When the year 1888 dawned Abbey was at Broadway, but on January 22nd, having *The Merchant of Venice* drawings much in mind,

he hurried off to Venice. Although back in town on St. Valentine's Day, he had been able to make a number of sketches for Venetian backgrounds, to spend a day in Verona, and to be long enough in Munich to take notes in the Museum and to buy a variety of swords; while he was able, in Paris, to see Reinhart and do something to cheer him out of a fit of the blues.

On returning to London he set about finding a studio of his own, deciding at last upon one at 56 Bedford Gardens, next door to Alfred Parsons, at No. 54. Some reconstruction was, however, necessary, for the lower portion had been used as a workshop and the studio over it was approached by an outside stair from the garden. Abbey added the glass-house and costume room which enclosed the staircase; he enlarged the studio window and made a little writing room, the walls of which were covered with red striped satin damask; and he cut a doorway into No. 54, so that he could live there while working at 56. Meanwhile during Mr. Sargent's absence in America, he made use of his studio at 33 Tite Street. Writing to Reinhart on March 10th, Abbey says: "I have been living the quietest sort of life since I came back here—perforce, for my work on these Shakespeare things requires more concentration and careful consideration than anything I have ever tried before. *The Merchant of Venice* is gradually assuming shape, and will be better than I dared to hope when I began. I am working in J. S. S.'s studio and have raked over most of his old Venetian studies, some of which will be most useful for backgrounds. . . ."

There are no other letters for 1888 between February and November, but Alfred Parsons's notes tell us that Abbey visited him at Frome in April, and that they shared a farm at Shiplake in July for Henley regatta. In June the two friends had a joint exhibition —Abbey's first in England—at the Fine Art Society's, showing the drawings for *She Stoops to Conquer*, and, by Mr. Parsons, those for Wordsworth's sonnets. From Mr. Pennell's notice in the *Star* a sentence may be quoted. Of Abbey he said: "There is certainly no one else living to-day in England who could produce such a set of drawings. . . . To art collectors—if any real one exists—they should be a prize. . . ."

EXEUNT SALARINO AND SOLANIO.

Twenty and a half inches by twelve and a half inches.

1888.

"THE MERCHANT OF VENICE," ACT I, SCENE I.

THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, PORTIA AND NERISSA

PRINCE OF MOROCCO : "MISLIKE ME NOT FOR MY COMPLEXION."

Nineteen and a half inches by twelve and a half inches.

1888.

"THE MERCHANT OF VENICE," ACT II, SCENE I.

BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO AND NERISSA.

PORTIA : "AWAY THEN ; I'M LOCK'D IN ONE OF THEM."

Nineteen and a half inches by twelve and a half inches.

1888.

"THE MERCHANT OF VENICE," ACT III, SCENE II.

JESSICA AND LORENZO.

JESSICA: "NAY, BUT ASK MY OPINION, TOO, OF THAT."
LORENZO: "I WILL ANON; FIRST, LET US GO TO DINNER."

Eleven inches by nine and a half inches.

1888.

"THE MERCHANT OF VENICE," ACT III., SCENE V.

The Shiplake holiday ended in calamity, for Abbey had previously contracted some rheumatic trouble which made a visit to Homburg necessary, whither he went with Mr. Harold Roller, the friend to whose camera we owe the very interesting and lively photograph of the artist at work reproduced in this book. Another visitor to Homburg at the time—Mr. (now Sir) John Hare—succeeded in interesting Abbey in his forthcoming production of the English version of Sardou's play, *La Tosca*, sufficiently to induce him to design the costumes for it. We have seen Abbey drawing Sothern and other performers in old English comedy in New York, and helping Miss Anderson in *A Winter's Tale;* but this was to be his first serious theatrical task, and he was, as we shall see, to throw himself into it with all his energy.

A letter from Abbey to Charles Parsons on November 3rd, 1888, reports progress. "My trip to Homburg, I am sorry to say, did me good. I hated the place so, that I hoped it wouldn't, but I fear it did. Since my return I have been taking up the last thread of the '*Merchant of V.*,' and Osgood has now the first instalment of a series of drawings, begun in pain and sorrow and continued through many vicissitudes. Whatever other faults they may have, they will not err on the score of presenting as careful pictures as I have been able to make, of life in Venice at the end of the fifteenth century. I have spared no pains nor expense to secure at least archæological correctness. . . ."*

"I, of course, chose this particular time—when I was spending my last penny, and all the prospective pennies I could count on, on books of reference and articles of costume—to be very ill, and, of all things, to build [that is, add to] a small house in Kensington. . . . I have had to adapt two storeys. In the lower one I have put up a very fine old panelled room of 1650 (the date is carved on the chimney piece). There are four old Flemish windows with shutters ornamented with steel hinges and locks, etc., and in the L there are stairs

* These drawings were not published in the magazine until April, 1890. The first of the illustrations to the "Comedies" to be published were those to *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in December, 1889.

leading up into a glass-house, through which one goes to the studio proper. There is a little room off, which is to be hung in red damask. The studio is in blue stuff—a sort of jute material. My big window is very good. . . . I hope I shall find the place interesting to work in —as interesting as Broadway, which is remarkably full of floating particles of what is called 'working impulse.' It looks interesting *now*, at any rate.

"'Falstaff' is down here now; I enclose his head. I regret to say that his costume (which has figured at Oxford at a week's performance by the Oxford University Dramatic Club) I find a little too dull and uncharacteristic, so I am just now having another one made, of that cloth known as 'dagges.' I think the Broadway tailor (who is also tax-collector and clerk of the vestry) regards me as one insane. 'Falstaff' (whose usual name is Dunn, an old model who fought in the Indian Mutiny, and who has since been super and dresser at Drury Lane) is sitting in the kitchen at this moment entertaining the cook and other servants—judging by the screams of laughter borne hither upon the dank November air.

"I dare say that to write or speak of evenings in this big studio, with its tapestries and carpets, and overgrown fireplace, its shining pewter pots and brass pots and pans, and its nightly songs of Schumann and Rubinstein and Grieg and Lassen by Nettie Huxley and Lily Millet, is to seem to idealise the life that exists here; which is not by any means all rose leaves and lavender, but is always interesting and interested. I find I can do elaborate architectural backgrounds much better under these influences than I can sitting alone with a glass of whisky and water for my only companion, at 54 Bedford Gardens. These girls can always lend a hand, and Nettie Huxley sits for drapery admirably. Mrs. Barnard and Anna Tadema and Lucia Fairchild are all useful in various ways. I find they can cut things out better than I can. . . ."

The *Old Songs*, having finished in the magazine, came out in volume form in the late autumn of 1888. The poems had been chosen with much taste from out-of-the-way as well as familiar sources, ranging from Spenser's "Perigot" and Cuddy's "Roundelay" to

FALSTAFF AND MISTRESS QUICKLY.

MISTRESS QUICKLY: "MARRY, THIS IS THE SHORT AND THE LONG OF IT."

Seventeen and a half inches by eleven and a half inches.

1889.

"THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR," ACT II, SCENE II

"Kitty of Coleraine." Of the drawings to "Sally in our Alley" Millais, in a speech when distributing the prizes at the Sheffield School of Art, said that "he regarded them as the most beautiful illustrations he had seen since the days of Fred Walker"; and writing from Washington on January 21st, 1889, John Hay says: "Your *Old Songs* are lovely. They have been my salvation this Christmas. I have given them to everybody. The Chinese Ambassador dotes on them." Hay's admiration for Abbey's work was, it should be said, constant. Writing in October, 1888, he had remarked: "My house is unfurnished till I get those drawings of yours. Of course you have forgotten what they are, so I jog your memory. [Six drawings are then named, two being from *The Quiet Life*.] You can't think how much they are needed on my wall. In fact, to quote the ingenious Mr. Pears, 'I won't be happy till I get them!' If the Shakespeares are for Mammon you must save me one or two of them. We passed this summer in the Rocky Mountains, in and about Manitou in Colorado. I never lived so near heaven before—some 10,000 feet above sea level. As my doctors had warned me against any great altitude I thought I would try Pike's Peak (14,000), so we all went up there in a wagon the day before we started for home, and I remain as before, like Theodore Winthrop's Frenchman, with a good heart and a bad stomach."

The record of the year 1888 may be brought to a close with one or two notes from George du Maurier, written thereabouts to Abbey in his capacity as a London adviser to *Harper's* on matters both artistic and literary. Du Maurier had been asked to provide a satirical social scene for *Harper's Magazine* each month and Abbey was acting in a way as his editor. Here is one note:

"New Grove House,
"Hampstead Heath,
"November 22nd, 1888.

"DEAR ABBEY,

"I send you on next page a little 'pome' translated from the French of Sully-Prudhomme. Would same, with illustration, suit *Harper* to be printed, pome *on one* side, picture on the *other?* If so let your little Du know.

"Yours ever, G. DU MAURIER."

GEORGE DU MAURIER

A Dream.

"Ah! si vous saviez comme on pleure
De vivre seul et sans foyers. . . ."

—SULLY-PRUDHOMME.

If you but knew what tears, alas!
One weeps for kinship unbestowed,
In pity you would sometimes pass
My poor abode.

If you but knew what balm, for all
Sad souls, is in an angel's glance,
Your eyes would on my window fall
As tho' by chance.

If you but knew the heart's delight
To feel its fellow heart is by,
You'd linger, as a sister might,
These gates anigh.

If you but knew how love can yearn
For one sweet voice and presence dear,
Who knows but you might simply turn
And enter here!

G. DU MAURIER.

Another note, with a charming drawing:

"DEAR ABBEY,

"Will above, with nice landscape, do for a Harper? Also: Jolly garden, jolly, pretty girls round jolly father, who has just taken beautiful house with garden so as to get young *eligibles* up to play lawn-tennis. To him girls: 'We are all determined never to *marry* now we've got this beautiful house and garden!'

"Yours ever,

"G. DU MAURIER.

"Tip me a line, dear boy."

CHAPTER XX

A NEW FRIEND AND *THE QUIET LIFE*

1889 Aged 36–37

Miss Mead—Introspective Letters—Art and Nationality—Aspirations and Attempts—Solitary Work and London Recreations—Departure for New York—*The Quiet Life*—Austin Dobson

ONCE again we are advancing a little too quickly, for an event occurred in May, 1888, which was to have a profound influence upon Abbey's life. The Millets spent the winter of 1887–1888 in America, and when they returned to Broadway in May, 1888, brought with them Miss Mead, of New York, who was to become an inmate of Russell House, and, with the exception of a few weeks in London in the summer, and visits to Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Watts and other friends, was to lodge there pretty constantly until the end of January, 1889, and later was to become Mrs. Abbey.

Miss Mead was born at Torquay, in Devonshire, of American parentage, both parents being of purely English descent. Her father's people had settled in America in 1640, and her family still holds a remnant of the property, situated thirty miles from New York, in Greenwich, Connecticut, which, according to the town records, was in its possession in 1660. She was one of nine children, the only girl who survived babyhood, and growing up in a household of boys, she kept pace with them in their studies and vied with them in all their games. She was a capital horse-woman, an expert swimmer, and good at all sports. Her ancestors on both sides were graduates of Yale University; her brothers were Yale men. On the margin of a pamphlet ("Little Journeys," by E. Hubbard), to be dealt with later, Abbey has written, "Miss Mead was of the third [should be second] generation of her family who went to Miss Green's school in New York, then at No. 1 Fifth Avenue, and afterwards she was graduated at Vassar College and took there a post-graduate course. After travelling extensively in Europe, she studied

the Romance languages and literature in Germany and France, heard Zarncke lecture at the University of Leipsic and Gaston de Paris at the Sorbonne in Paris. She also worked with Professor Poore for a year at his laboratory in the School of Mines in New York. Not because it was in any way necessary, but because she desired to prove that she could earn her own living, she taught for two years in the Roxbury [Boston] Latin School for boys"—the only woman in the school.

Abbey had known of Miss Mead as far back as 1884, in connection with the exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, of a collection of paintings by Watts, which she had been instrumental in bringing to America, but they did not meet until May 27th, 1888, when he and the late Comyns Carr came to Russell House for the week end. Nor did it then occur to either that destiny had brought them together in no idle way.

Abbey was not at Broadway again in 1888 until the middle of September, but from that time until Miss Mead's departure, at the end of January, they saw each other daily, and, having many interests in common, soon became good comrades, and gradually explored together all the hills and valleys about Broadway—particularly the hills. Indeed, one memorable walk remained a legend in the neighbourhood for many a day. They had started to climb Bredon Hill, to see the view, but by the time they had come to its foot the clouds had crept halfway down, completely hiding the top, and so they walked on until they came to Tewkesbury, fifteen miles from Russell House. Before me lies a letter dated "Broadway, December 1st, 1888," written by Fred Barnard to his daughter "Polly": "Yesterday it pelted with rain all day long—bitterly cold—slop, slush, and sticky, slippery mud. Mr. Abbey and Miss Mead chose the opportunity to walk all the way to Tewkesbury and back—fifteen miles each way. They came back a *short cut* through a ploughed field a mile in length. However they turned up at about nine as jolly as sandboys."

This was the beginning of a friendship—rare and perfect—between these two, a friendship which lasted as long as Abbey lived,

growing in mutual dependence, in confidence and in strength to the end, and which led, two years after their first meeting, to their marriage, on April 22nd, 1890.

In light upon Abbey's activities, thoughts, and projects in 1889 we are peculiarly rich by reason of the preservation of the letters which he wrote to Miss Mead between her departure for America in January, 1889, and his own visit to that country in April, and again during his sojourn in England between his return and the second visit to New York at the end of the year. It was not until her departure in January that he began to realise to what an extent he had been stimulated by her society; and how keenly he felt the deprivation of this stimulus is to be gathered from the letters which he wrote to her almost daily from that time. From the less intimate portions of this correspondence Mrs. Abbey has permitted passages to be quoted.

But first let me refer to a letter to Charles Parsons on February 1st, sympathising with him on the death of his son Frank: "I was very sad at hearing of poor Frank's death. He was a good boy, very lovable, and, I thought, clever too. I hear little from America now, save trouble and disaster of various kinds. My dear old grandmother died not many weeks ago, aged eighty-nine. I am glad I remember her in the days before her age and infirmities had weakened her intellect. She was very good to me when I was a little chap. My grandfather, her husband, still lives; he is nearly ninety. They had been married sixty-six years."—This was Jane Kiple (*née* Clancy), mother of Mrs. Abbey, and wife of Jacob Kiple, who died later in the same year.

Charles Parsons had just taken a momentous step. One of Abbey's first letters to Miss Mead tells of it: "I am much upset by news from Harpers'. That dear old Parsons has sent in his resignation as head of the Art Department. . . . I am writing a letter now to express my regret and sorrow that one of my old friends—and best friends—should be severing the tie that has bound us for so many years. I cannot forget the happy pride I felt when he wrote to my father nineteen years ago, in answer to a letter enclosing some sketches of mine, 'What the young man needs is opportunity,' and he very shortly after gave me an opportunity, and has given me other opportunities

ever since. I owe him debts of gratitude I cannot easily repay." From Charles Parsons's reply to Abbey I quote a few cordial lines: "We shall find a simple home in the country, and I hope to amuse myself in sketching and painting. The thought to me is inspiring, to be free, after twenty-six years of hard work, with health and a capacity to see and enjoy a simple life, and you, my dear friends [Alfred Parsons was included], must not forget me in my new career. I shall look for a more intimate knowledge of what you are doing, and hope that we shall be drawn still closer together."

Here are further passages from the letters to Miss Mead: "January 22nd, 1889.—. . . . I really feel the ambition I used to have long ago coming back to me. I owe that to you, with many other things I cannot speak of.

"January 26th.—. . . I have been up to town. . . . The Lord Mayor's dinner was a great sight. [The Lord Mayor's farewell banquet to Mr. Phelps, the retiring American Minister.] I sat near Frederic Harrison and Sargent, . . . Leighton [afterwards Lord Leighton] harped on the tiresome old string about the efforts of men still seeking to express themselves in forms which do not yet bear the stamp of their national characteristics. . . . I cannot understand a man so clever as L. is, taking this narrow view of art, not recognising the fact that artists who can do so will always gravitate towards what seems to them the artistic field in which they will be best able to do justice to, or display, their ability. I cannot think the quality of this ability is a matter of nationality. On the contrary, in many cases, what are considered national characteristics are in artists wholly wanting. The German mind, for instance, is supposed to be capable of an infinitely greater amount of patient research than the French mind. In the artists of Germany this quality seems to be absolutely lacking, if we except Liebl, while in France Gérome and Meissonier, Bastien Lepage and Dagnan and many others, have been wonders of patience. I don't know that this proves anything at all, however. An artist is an artist, no matter where he may have been born, and in these days of easy international communication it is reasonable to suppose that artists will be less and less distinctively national. We can only guess

what Jan Steen and Terburgh and Van der Meer [of Delft] would have left us to look at if they could have easily travelled out of their own land. . . .

"January 28th.—. . . . I have begun a little picture of 'Ophelia'—I'll make a sketch of it for you. I cannot help having a guilty feeling whenever I am painting, as though I were wasting time and energy that ought to be applied to my legitimate profession. . . . I have another scheme—an old, old, subject of mine—one I used to make sketches of years ago—of Mrs. Bracegirdle or some other Jacobean or Carolean actress (What was Pepys's friend's name—Knipp?), dancing in boy's clothes (not too boyish; just boyish enough), on a stage, with gallants of the time lolling in the wings, in great periwigs, and so on, lighted by footlights. It is odd how long it takes me to get a subject all rounded off in my brain. That 'Old Song' I had in hand for years. So also 'Stony Ground,' Carnegie's picture. . . ." The Bracegirdle theme, unhappily, was never brought to fruition.

Of an art student—"I don't think she has the student habit. She is as clever as she can be up to a certain point, but it seems to me she lacks the sensitiveness necessary to a student of any art dealing in degree with human feelings.

"I don't believe an unsensitive person knows when he is in the wrong. . . .

"I haven't said how much I miss you. . . . I found a poor little mistaken primrose yesterday. Here it is.

"January 29th.—. . . . All alone to-day, and working at a *Merry Wives* drawing. . . . Ford anxious to see what is in the buckbasket. It is nearly finished, I am pleased to state, and has more action in it than any of the others have. . . . And after work I walked up the village and off over Chadwick's land . . . and saw the afterglow. . . . It was very beautiful this evening after a rainy day, the sky all pink and hazy and the village with its quiet cloud of blue smoke beneath me, and the street wet, glistening, and everything quite silent, until a boy came whistling through the hedge down below and made a white spectre of himself in his white fustian, with his uneasy 'familiar' of a collie all across my foreground. . . .

FALSTAFF, PISTOL, BARDOLPH, NYM, ROBIN.

FALSTAFF : " BARDOLPH, FOLLOW HIM ; A TAPSTER IS A GOOD TRADE."

Eighteen and a half inches by eleven and a half inches.

1889.

" THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR," ACT I, SCENE III.

"January 31st.—. . . . I had a long day's work yesterday. How curious this work is! Sometimes one feels one could work with both hands, if they were both available, and then again *one* hand seems too many. . . . You must read Waldstein's article on Ruskin in the last *Harper*. It is very good. I don't believe Ruskin will be thought even that much of after his death. I think him an overrated, windy person, with no knowledge of the subject he chooses to write most of, but a wonderful power of phrase making, and a most enviable directness of style. His matter, which, after all, is the main thing, seems to me pernicious and misleading to the last degree. . . .

"February 4th.—. . . For myself I am always sillier than I am for other people. Standing in the auditorium, I feel myself much clearer about the actions and general conduct of other people, and I dare say that no profounder nor more pitiless critic of the actions of his fellow men ever existed than I am. . . .

"February 6th.—. . . What an extraordinary fillip or burst of intelligence one sometimes has, when everything seems to be apparent in a clear, clean way, suddenly. If one could only 'hang on,' if darkness didn't inevitably follow a flash of lightning, I, for one, should profit greatly. . . . I know I go on dully for weeks and sometimes months with no more sensitiveness than a toad or a stone, and then in the middle of a sentence in a book, or perhaps looking up at a sky, or at a woman in a box at a play—it has come when I've been fumbling for a tennis ball in a hedge or in a field of high grasses—suddenly—a great flash of great possibilities, a flash that shows me wonderful great big things, and I feel I must set my teeth, and do, DO things. This quiet here to-day has been very big, somehow. It has lacked any small elements. I have worked at Pistol and Bardolph and Sir Hugh Evans with real pleasure, feeling them stepping stones to other things. I have worked on my Windsor architecture, but [he had been reading *Romola*] I have seen the Florence of Michael Angelo and of Leonardo, and I long to get at the frame of mind that made them work. . . . When I think of the wasted precious years I have lost, that growing time of my young mind, and of the few days that seem to be left me in this busy world, I begin to long for a con-

vent, where everything sordid and little and worrying and entangling is walled out, and where I might have a great empty place to work in, with a dark cloudy, misty wing, where, as the twilight came on, I might see the images I long to re-create. . . .

"February 12th.—. . . I have been wondering whether it isn't my great fault to try to make things better than they really are—I mean in my work and all. I try to do brilliant young gallants from poor old Leme [his model and factotum] and dashing young damsels from very frowsy people very often, but I don't know whether that is degenerating or not, whether, if I set down the plain vulgarity of what I see, rather than try to see my pretty people *through* what is before me, it would be an evidence of strength. I don't *know:* I am just thinking it with a pen. . . . I am not so irretrievably in debt as you might be led to think; but I do long to be free and not to owe anything at all. . . . Osgood and Black came down with me on Saturday and stopped over until yesterday. . . . It snowed all Saturday night and all day Sunday and most of Sunday night, and everything has still that dead sound—or, rather, lack of sound. . . . A model came down to-day. She is very tall and graceful. . . . I keep thinking of an old early Victorian Song, 'Taking Tea in the Arbor.' I shall draw it all day to-morrow, I know. She brought down from Linton [J.D.] a very good dress for 'Mariana' [for a Shakespeare illustration] and Barthe has sent down a nun's dress, white and black. . . . I have lots of architectural material for *All's Well*. . . . I don't like the play. Bertram doesn't get his deserts at all, but his particular species of sin is usually dealt with rather leniently by the bard. Angelo's Mariana should really be a hideous old hag who drinks or takes snuff or something . . .

"I remember once your saying you always read people's biographies, and rather resenting it at the time, for no reason whatever, and thinking it over afterwards with the intention of saying something about it, but I don't think I ever did say anything about it, and now, during dinner, I have been reading a very interesting article about Walter Scott, in the February *Scribner*. Wonderful to be so busy! It makes me think something must be wrong with me some-

where and I wonder what it is . . . but here is the root of my resentment about your remark about biographies. I remember being particularly fired, when quite a boy, by Tom Taylor's edition (I don't know whether there ever was any other) of Benjamin Robert Haydon's *Autobiography*. His struggles and aspirations and bitternesses, his pain at the slights put upon him, were very real and very tragic to me. [Here he refers to his disappointment already mentioned, on seeing Haydon's demonstration of the correctness of his drawing in his picture of "Curtius Leaping into the Gulf."] I felt that all my sympathy for his woes and his slights, my awe of the man who despised Wilkie for his subjects of the boys and the garden engine, were thrown away. . . Still, I had a good time while I was reading the book, and I oughtn't to forget that. . . .

"I know my pen runs away with me, but you make me do what I have not been in the habit of doing—go down into myself. I know it is all very egotistical. . . . I really did try hard to do *my* best when I was only encouraged to do somebody else's best; *that* I did really do, and have stuck to it, the thing in my art that seemed to *me* to be right and true, and I may say without false modesty, or anything else, that I have raised the level of my particular art in my own country, and have had a good many followers, of one sort and another. Do you think I ought *not* to be encouraged by this! I don't very often think of it. The followers have not followed the thing in my work that I have really cared most for; like most imitators they have imitated the weaknesses. But I feel a strength at the back of it and I see things that may be done—that never have been done. To go back to poor old Ruskin, who says (*under the instruction of the P.R.B.*)—I can't remember the text—something about the representation of events not as they might be supposed *poetically* to have happened, but as they really might have happened. That is what I'd like to do. It was done by Millais in the early days. . . . Did you ever see the 'Ophelia' or the 'Vale of Rest'? (two nuns digging a grave, this latter) —a very wonderful picture. I'd like to carry that on. I'd *like* to carry it farther than poor Bastien did in his 'Joan of Arc,' but I'm afraid it's not for me. *This is enough of this!*

"February 17th.—.... I seem to be paying debts all the time.... I don't feel that I am quite an idiot, but certainly these money things are bothering....

"The long walk I had on Friday, over Buckland Hill, and round by the top of Laverton, on to Snowshill, and round and down by the tower, in the most brilliant, beautiful moonlight, was not lonely, for my thoughts were great company. I wonder if you have ever thought so hard that you've had to run to keep up? Ideas and things come in such an unruly mob sometimes, I have fifty at once, and it wears me out to think I can't do it *all*. I awoke yesterday morning full of a picture of 'Mariana,' and I laboured away at it all the while I was dressing and having my coffee, and was obliged to put it aside for pen-and-ink backgrounds when I got down into the studio ...

"I had a full, hard day's work to-day, and have finished a lot of drawings—(Leme is to take them up to town to-morrow, and is to bring down some things for me)—and the sunset was so very beautiful that I walked off towards it, up through the coppice and out to the left through a paddock where they have been pollarding the trees and which I found full of primroses.... I saw a beautiful sky for my dawn picture of 'Corinna'... all steely, whitey blue, with pink streaky clouds across it....

"February 18th.—.... I got up earlier than is my wont, and came down, and did a whole-length large drawing of Leme as 'Slender,' which I hoped rather was not going to be good, but it wasn't so bad —a little too idiotic perhaps. At any rate, it seemed good enough to warrant my painting all the afternoon. So I began the 'Mariana' and somehow (I must be getting VERY conceited) it didn't turn out badly either—SO FAR. [Here follows sketch.] Would you have a miniature in her hand? Would you have the boy blind? Would you have a *prie-dieu* under the triptych? I wonder if I'll ever finish all these things? I do want to, so very much. I was dead done up at tea time, and went out to walk and turned round to the left toward Buckland, and trudged away, wondering if spring had really come, the air was so full of songs of birds and that curious unripe smell that early spring brings with it....

SLENDER TO MISTRESS ANNE PAGE.

SLENDER: "WHY DO YOUR DOGS BARK SO?"

Sixteen and a half inches by eight and a half inches.

1889.

"THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR," ACT I, SCENE I.

"February 25th, 54 Bedford Gardens.—. . . I went to the Gallery Club and saw some splendid pictures and talked a bit with Jimmy Whistler. It was an orchestra night and the celebrated amateur Orchestral Society did the music, which was good. . . . They played a beautiful thing of Bach's—a sort of fuguey thing that went on and on, ambling in a gentle, soothing way, that I could have heard for hours and hours. . . .

"March 3rd.—. . . . It has been a long week, and I have been about a good deal. . . . at Sargent's two or three times. . . . I went one afternoon to Mrs. Harry White's. . . . [Henry] James was there and had been at the Parnell trial. It was the eventful day when the wretched Pigott failed to turn up, and he described it all very well. . . .

"March 5th.—. . . . I want to do my 'Mariana.' I see her differently —a little—now, in the back of a dim room, with the boy and harp in the foreground. . . .

"March 11th.—. . . The Jamesons are great old friends of mine. Theirs was the house I liked to go to most when I first came here. I used to meet Edmund Gurney there and Albert Moore and Meredith, and Jameson used to have lots of Wagner music, but they have gone away to live now at Torquay. . . .

"March 12th.—. . . I dined with the [Seymour] Trowers, a beautiful dinner and a beautiful house. The Jamesons again and Mrs. Arthur Murch. . . She is an artist, and old Costa, the landscape painter, has been stopping with her. John [Sargent] was there, and we all argued about things and interested ourselves very much. . . .

"March 14th.—. . . That bit of Dekker keeps running in my head as I go walking about this great stony town. I walk keeping time to its rhythm.

> 'O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!
> Work apace, apace, apace, apace!'

"Saturday, 16th.—. . . I did my first really good day's work yesterday. It was a trivial little thing of a girl trimming some rose trees in a churchyard, and a carter, leading a horse, looking at her over the wall. It is Bretferton churchyard and the houses across the green for

background. [Prologue to *The Quiet Life*.] I tackled 'Mariana' water-colour again for about the sixth time. I can't get her. Why, your friend asks, do I not do my own ideas? I don't know that I have any, really mine. Has anyone? One must be always open to suggestion, and must keep one's temperament so sensitive that I feel it would be especially difficult for *me* to be original. I suddenly see things sometimes before I try to put them down, and sometimes they come in scraps, like the girl in the graveyard. I didn't dream of making it a graveyard when I began it. I don't know now whether it means anything, or even why it seemed a good thing to do. I don't understand the working of the human mind at all. I *feel* it. I can feel for people I like and care for, and even for my own folk whom I have imagined, but I don't in the least know why. I could not in the least go on with the pattern and folds of their dresses if I had not succeeded a little in suggesting their personality first. And then sometimes when they become vulgar in drawing under my eye—more and more—I hate them altogether, and can't go on at all. . . .

"My room begins to look more homely . . . and Leme brought up a lot of my old friends that I know. The walls are still pretty bare, but 'Mariana' looks well against them, so I shall not hang many things up yet. I am having little black frames made for about twenty of the Dürers, and I have hanging up a large photograph of the Holbein at the Hague, the beautiful lady with the white things around her head, and a curious head by Botticelli from the Louvre, and two Dürer photos. . . . I walked off a fit of the blues last night. I met Albert Moore and went homeward with him. He remains the pure artist always—always trying for the best and sticking to his principles—his artistic principles. . . . I liked talking to him. He is one of the few artists like John [Sargent] and a few others, who feels what you mean and also makes you feel what he means. . . .

"Tuesday, March 19th.—. . . . On Sunday Horry Harper turned up and we went round to Leighton's about four. . . . He has such beautiful things about him. I wonder if they don't clog his brain? I wonder if so many very fine things in the vicinity of what one is doing are not detrimental to the working of one's own imagination. I

am beginning to think that a bald barn is the best place to see visions in, not a luxurious museum filled with precious scraps that command one's attention and insist upon being respected. One's own poor little ideas seem so insignificant and so little worth the doing. Monday I had a charming call from Mrs. Perugini (Kate Dickens). Do you know her? She is the cleverest of them all. I dined early at the club and went with Marcus Stone to the R.A. to see the Muybridge things.... Really a delightful exhibition. They were thrown up by a magic lantern to a great size. Made me long to do the nude. I don't know why, but the men's figures were all so much better than the women's....

"Last evening I had a regular go in at *La Tosca* and really feel that I have accomplished something. To-day I tried 'Angelo'—this morning in the lower room [oak panelled]. The effect was splendid. This is a rough sketch of his dress, but I could not see well to do him with a pen. It was too dark, and the white paper made things dazzly in that dark place. Yesterday I tried to do Isabella's head, but I could not get it right... It is very lonely here now without Alfred.... He went away in good spirits.... I wish they had not sent 'The Love Song' to the Paris Exposition. Why not 'Kitty of Coleraine' and 'Barbara Allen'?... I must write to Hay and tell him he can't have his 'Harvest Home' drawings yet....

"March 25th.—... I have noticed that when men—city men—begin buying they usually buy landscapes first of all. And I dare say they are right. I should do so. A room furnished with landscapes is a big room to live in.... I had a dear little chap sitting to me for Falstaff's page, and I did so well this morning that I felt justified in trying to paint most of the afternoon. So he has been sitting for the singing boy in 'Mariana.' I shall bring this over with me. I want you to see it. I tried to do it all in a blue room, but it was too much blue I thought. However I may try it blue again. Yesterday I worked on the Duke in *Measure for Measure*—did the pattern on his robe, most fidgeting work. Joe [Comyns Carr] came in about then and walked with me as far as du Maurier's. I stopped at du Maurier's until nearly seven. Nice people, and a happy family. I asked them to dine with

me here next Saturday—du M., Mrs. du M., and Sylvia [afterwards Mrs. Arthur Llewelyn Davies]. . . Henry James is coming too. . . .

"March 28th.—. . . I went down to supper at the Lyceum in honour of John's portrait. It did look stunning there. I sat between Ellen Terry and Mrs. Beerbohm Tree. She is a remarkable woman —Miss Terry—so remarkably well-informed and read."

On April 6th, five days after reaching the age of thirty-seven, Abbey sailed for America in the *Servia*, intent—professionally—upon the personal superintendence of *The Quiet Life* series as a book. This is, to my mind, one of the most beautiful and satisfying works that the hand of man has devised. The poems chosen by Abbey for illustration by himself and Alfred Parsons were Andrew Marvell's "Garden," Cowley's "Wish," Praed's "Quince" and "The Vicar," Pope's "Ode to Solitude," three anonymous stanzas entitled "The Married Man," and Randolph's invocation "To Master Anthony Stafford." A third associate—Mr. Dobson—supplied a Prologue and an Epilogue. The Prologue ran thus:

"Even as one in city pent,
Dazed with the stir and din of town,
Drums on the pane in discontent,
And sees the dreary rain come down,
Yet, through the dimmed and dripping glass,
Beholds, in fancy, visions pass,
Of spring that breaks with all her leaves,
Of birds that build in thatch and eaves,
Of woodlands where the throstle calls,
Of girls that gather cowslip balls,
Of kine that low and lambs that cry,
Of wains that jolt and rumble by,
Of brooks that sing by brambly ways,
Of sunburned folk that stand at gaze,
Of all the dreams with which men cheat
The stony sermons of the street,
So, in its hour, the artist brain

THE QUIET LIFE

Weary of human ills and woes,
Weary of passion and of pain,
And vaguely craving for repose,
Deserts awhile the stage of strife
To draw the even, ordered life,
The easeful days, the dreamless nights,
The homely round of plain delights,
The calm, the unambitioned mind,
Which all men seek, and few men find."

The illustrations for *The Quiet Life* should go far to persuade the reader that it is no exaggeration to call it one of the perfect things. The quintessence of the most delicate spirit of English serenity is in it.

CHAPTER XXI

BEGINNING OF THE "COMEDIES"

1889 (*concluded*) Aged 37

A Fortnight in New York—Further Letters to Miss Mead—Studies from Nature —The " May-Day Morning "—The " Minstrel " Motif—Colarossi, the Model —A Visit to Mr. Sargent at Fladbury—The Costumes for *La Tosca*

IN New York Abbey saw the Harpers, saw his Cousin Jo, saw members of his family and "lots of the fellows," but, most of all, Miss Mead; and when, after his very brief visit—a fortnight only —he sailed again for England, it was agreed, although Miss Mead had given no promise, that the correspondence should continue, let the outcome be what it would. Accordingly, after his departure on May 1st, on the *Germanic*, Abbey wrote to her almost daily letters until his arrival in New York at the very beginning of the next year (1890), when an engagement immediately followed.

His companions on the voyage were Osgood and his old and tried friends the Laffans, who, discussing seriously his determination to paint in oil, used every possible argument to encourage him to do so. On May 10th he arrived again at Bedford Gardens with a mind set upon his new medium, but there was much to be done before he could abandon himself to it. Not that he ever did wholly abandon himself to oil painting, for even after the completion of *The Deserted Village* and the "Tragedies" of Shakespeare, which were not finished until 1909, he drew in pen and ink from time to time, and made one or two important pen drawings in the last year of his life.

In the first letter from London, on May 11th, 1889, to Miss Mead, he says, "I dined at home last night, and went off afterwards to see Hare at the new theatre. . . . *La Tosca* will not be wanted till September. You don't know how relieved I was. I didn't know I had been so anxious. . . . I have been painting away like a good one today, or rather like a bad one, for I have rubbed out all I did, nearly. Still it will be nicer to paint on again."

Abbey had never been quite happy in his new studio in Bedford Gardens; was always restless there and could not seem to settle to

work; but on May 15th he writes, "The room isn't nearly so beastly now I've got the Dürers all up... and they brighten the place immensely ... but I'm going away—I hope to-morrow—to Broadway. I really have painted pretty well to-day—a pinky sky and a town wall. It was a sudden subject I thought of—a strolling minstrel being turned out of a mediæval town. He is a sort of Gringoirish Barnaby Rudge kind of a Blondel-like person, and has a brown loaf under his arm, a mandolin at his back, and a careless smile—rather a vacant one—if I can do it. I send a little sketch. There are a lady and a monk and donkey and a couple of men at arms watching him going away. Perhaps the monk will be trudging into the town minding his own affairs. I thought this little subject perhaps a better one to tackle than an important one."—This particular canvas was never finished, but the subject allured him for the rest of his life, as is shown by the multitude of sketches he made for it. Two paintings on the subject —often referred to in the letters as the "Jongleur"—he did, however, finish: one a water-colour, "The Vagabond," painted about the year 1894—a minstrel dressed in red, strolling out from the gate of an old walled town, and playing on his mandolin as he trudged along through the snow; and the other, an oil painting, "The Bridge," exhibited at the R.A. in the year 1898, and bought by Lord Carlisle for the Art Gallery at Capetown.

In the same letter, referring to his life in Philadelphia, before he left home, Abbey says, "I wasn't interested in anything at all until I began to read for myself ... and then the hours and hours I spent in the library in Philadelphia, poring over the pictures in the *Cornhill* —Walker's and du Maurier's—and the pictures in *Punch* and in all the English periodicals! I wonder what would have happened had my father known I was not at the Academy as he expected me to be, digging away at the antique. I wonder what would have become of me if I had grown up as John [Sargent] did—in Florence and Italy and France—with beautiful things—pictures and statues and things —always about. I often wonder that...."

Established again at Broadway, Abbey set to work at once to make studies of apple trees before their blossoms should lose their fresh-

ness, which were needed for what was to be his first Academy painting, "May-Day Morning," now taking shape in his mind as "Corinna Going a-Maying," which he had already treated in pen and ink in his *Herrick*. He had gone down on the 21st, where for a time he was to be alone, except for the housekeeper and his faithful henchman Leme, as the Millets were remaining in New York a few weeks longer. On the 22nd he writes: "All this day I have been hard at work at the tree by the greenhouse—the apple tree that is to be seen over the wall in the 'Corinna,' for the blossoms are dropping fast and in a few days they will be gone. I got at it first in oil and couldn't seem to draw it accurately enough—then I took a dig at it with crayon on grey paper, and then I took a bigger piece of grey paper and went at it with crayon and water colour, and then, at seven in the evening, I wired in at it again in oil, for it had the pinky light behind it that I want. But it is a frightfully difficult thing to do. I was at it all day, from ten o'clock, without any interval save fifteen minutes for luncheon, and about half an hour when I sketched some other blossoms on the road, over the wall. . ." Again, on the 23rd: ". . . I took my traps down through the long grass into Burrough's orchard, where I sat all the morning, up by the little mill dam, and dug away at a tree, much fresher than ours, with few or no blossoms off at all." And on the 24th: ". . . After luncheon yesterday I made a study of another little delicate tree and should have finished it to-day if it had not come on wet and showery."—All very interesting records of the determination of the artist neither to evade difficulties nor to be beaten by them. "May 26th.—. . . On Friday before dinner I took a walk up to the top of the hill, and in through Chadwick's gate, under the beeches, which are the most exquisite green. There are some beautiful old thorns I don't remember seeing before, just where the path begins at the bottom of the old road. One will do capitally for the one 'with seats beneath the shade,' when I come to do *The Deserted Village*. . . I think really, perhaps, one day I'll be a painter. 28th.—To-day Claudio in the cell. I may not be able to do him, but I have hopes. This will be the first black and white I shall have touched since my return. I can't help rather longing to let it go.

"I must ask you what you think of the photos [of himself]? I am sending one to Munich . . . very self-sufficient, and very glassy as to the eye and very determined as to the jaw and very superior as to the nose. It has altogether the aspect of one born to be a ruler of *men*. I never realised before how very crooked my nose is. . . ."

Eager to get on with *Measure for Measure*, the next Comedy he was to concentrate upon, Abbey had ordered certain costumes from Barthe, to be made from his own designs; and Irving had offered to lend him for the same purpose his "choice of the *Faust* things" at the Lyceum. During his whole career it was very rarely that he used, or could use, theatrical costumes except when made from his own designs or from the designs of an artist really learned in some particular period. He found them, as a rule, either badly cut or incorrect, too often made to agree with what the performers thought to be "becoming." In this matter his experience was that the costumes for men were usually even less satisfactory than the others, the actor's vanity being greater than the actress's!

On May 31st he writes from the Beefsteak Club: "... I've just been to the Lyceum, and Loveday, Irving and two fat women hauled out all the *Faust* things. There are 500 dresses in all. . . ."

Referring to his regret that the old masters had not given us more of the life of their own day and less of so called "imaginative" art: "... I am writing against myself now, but I dare say they couldn't help what they did any more than I can." And from Broadway a little later: "... I don't want you to imagine for an instant that what *I* do—what I have grown into doing in art—is what I really think the right thing—I mean the right thing of all things. It came about in curious ways, as I have told you. I dare say if I had had John's experience I might have been single and unencumbered, as he is, but I have been so entangled and half-wedded to what must be more or less a conscious and, therefore, not quite, quite spontaneous variety of work, that I never know whether I do really see what I see or not; I mean, looking at an old window—suddenly—instantly, if it is suggestive at all, I don't see that window as it is, at all, but as it might have been, with the people whom it was made for and the people who made it

looking through it at each other. Everything old I see that way. A matter of habit, of course, but I lose all the pleasure a modern should have in the real aspect of real things, under the light. I suppose we can't be quite all alike. . . . The imaginative work that appeals to me most is of a quaint and innocent sort, far removed from the tremendous and grandiose. The 'Joan of Arc' of Bastien is the greatest imaginative work of these sophisticated times. Well, I could, I dare say, talk all night about the others—the others of old days that appeal to me. First of all, there is Fra Angelico, who is least of all men who ever lived of the earth earthy, I should think; and then the other dear, quaint, innocent Italians, and by-and-by, the development of the elegance that was begun by Botticelli and most of all Crivelli. . . . Both Botticelli and Crivelli were the last word, especially the former, before the art that is called 'imaginative' became dreary and bourgeois and dull. . . .

"June 1st.—. . . . I have been working ever since a little after nine on *Measure for Measure*. The Duke telling him 'he has ever loved the life removed.' The monk is cautiously standing across the doorway. I am trying it in oil—black and white. I think it will be better practice than doing it in pen or even black chalk, or water colour. . . . Six o'clock. . . . I've had a full day's work. I nearly finished the monk. . . . It is very exciting, this painting. One's success is such a constant surprise, and one keeps doing little things quite accidentally that one has noticed and marvelled at in the technique of other men. I hope I'll get there some day. . . . Now, curiously, I don't want *anybody* about while I am at work. I used to long for people to be about, but lately I don't . . . and it spoils servants [to sit as models]. Leme is unique, but he is a bit spoiled. . . . Sunday. . . . I am full of what I want to say to you about painting . . . but it must wait. Go and see the little masterpiece of Van der Meer of Delft in the Metropolitan Museum [in New York]. . . . No pose, no striving nor straining. Just 'seeing beautifully' an ugly thing. . . ."

Writing to Charles Parsons to thank him for the photograph of his "dear old head," Abbey says: "I have grown to respect your opinion as *my* wisdom increased. Perhaps we have grown together, but you

THE DUKE AND FRIAR THOMAS

OIL.

DUKE: "MY HOLY SIR, NONE BETTER KNOWS THAN YOU
HOW I HAVE EVER LOVED THE LIFE REMOVED."

Sixteen and a half inches by twelve and a half inches.

1889.

"MEASURE FOR MEASURE," ACT I, SCENE IV.

have not been so busy getting yourself into shape as I have. . . . I may as well tell you, now that you are no longer in an official capacity, that I have been mostly *painting* since I returned. I have been making studies of apple-blossom over a wall for the 'Corinna Going a-Maying.' It is a daybreak picture and the sun gets up these days *much* too early. It comes easier with practice, of course."

To this letter Charles Parsons replied, in July, from his summer lodging at Westport Point, Massachusetts, where he was "literally in dreamland . . . nothing to do but eat, sleep . . . the old life behind me." "You know," he says, "very well, without my writing, how much affection and pride I have in you personally and how much I appreciate your art and sympathise with your aspirations for the full expression of the great talent God has given you. I hope and believe that your future work will show that I am not mistaken: and here let me urge you to devote a part of your time to painting. It does seem a great pity that you should not put some of your knowledge into colour, either oil or water. You can, if you only will. I shall look," he concludes, "for your letters and all of what you are doing with eager interest. Don't let the intervals be long between."

"June 7th [to Miss Mead].—. . . I am just going to paint, either in black and white or in colour, until I can get at something that I can express myself with—forget!"

On June 9th, to Miss Mead: ". . . I think I *must* do things with all my might. I think that is so. This morning I picked up Symonds's *Renaissance in Italy*—the painting volume—and I was so very interested in it that I hated to put it down. . . . He is so much better than Ruskin. He doesn't preach, doesn't tell you this is superlatively right and that absolutely, despicably bad. What he says of Fra Angelico is very good and very interesting. Dear me! what a curious thing art is. . . There are so many phases, so widely differing, and each good and right in its way. . . If I had grown up artistically independent—not depending upon what I produced for my living—I think I should have developed differently. I think I was on a pretty good path, so far as my perception went, when I first went to Harpers'. If I had been in Paris or London all those impressionable years,

I dare say I should have arrived at some perhaps more individual result, maybe sooner, too. . . ."

On June 21st—". . . To-day I have been working on Angelo and Isabella—Isabella principally. It is brown and black and white, and I am getting more and more easy with the oil every day. It takes longer than the pen in some ways. All the drapery and the heads and hands, and all that sort of thing, take much longer, but the architecture and that doesn't take nearly so long, and the values of the colours of the things are much truer, of course. She is in white serge, and the value of her head in the linen coif, and of the white dress against the white wall, I think I have got pretty well. At any rate it looks serious. He will be dark, and only his wicked eyes are to show over his hand. I think it will be one of the best. I have tried to keep him unforced and quiet. His clenched hand and the expression of his face I am trying to make tell the story."

"Mariana of the Moated Grange," also in *Measure for Measure*, was giving constant trouble. Writing on June 25th Abbey says: "I don't know how many Marianas I have done—I mean begun—but as yet she don't get right. I have begun pen ones, and crayon ones, and water-colours and several oil ones, and now I have begun another in brown and white. The boy is fairish, but I cannot get Mariana straight. I'm getting sick of her, but she *must* come. They are in two lights—the light coming over the hanging and a light from in front. She is very dark, away back in the corner."—The letter contained a sketch of the composition. Abbey continued to be possessed by this subject for many months, for not only did he make a Shakespeare illustration for the magazine but a water-colour—one of the most important of his works in that medium, which, finished at the end of 1890, was bought by the late Henry Marquand and is now in the possession of Mr. James Stillman, New York.

"June 29th.—. . . I had been in Worcester all the afternoon, and we went over the Cathedral, which has had almost every interesting thing removed by Gilbert Scott—that destroyer of history. The nave door was open and all down the aisle as we walked we could look over west—over the Severn—across the fields into the open country. I

ANGELO AND ISABELLA.

OIL.

Twenty-four and a half inches by sixteen and a half inches.

1889.

"MEASURE FOR MEASURE," ACT II, SCENE IV.

CLAUDIO AND ISABELLA.

CLAUDIO: "SWEET SISTER, LET ME LIVE."

Fifteen and three-quarter inches by twelve and a quarter inches.

1889.

"MEASURE FOR MEASURE," ACT III, SCENE I.

can't understand why that western door should have given the place an air of reality—of genuineness—but it did. . . . In the morning I *began* the last of the *Measure for Measure* series—Isabella kneeling to the Duke, who raises her up. I hope it will go well. It begins well, which is ominous. . . ." As a matter of fact Abbey thought this drawing one of the best of the series.

June 30th, after a reference to money matters: ". . . If I have wanted a chair or a table or a costume—for a drawing—often the entire sum I get for the drawing will not pay for—has not paid for—the outlay, but I have never hesitated on that account. These stockbrokers and business men who die having done nothing all their lives save buying and selling and coming home in the evening to their homes and their families, I do feel sorry for. I think often how very curious it must be to have leisure. I *never* seem to have any. I am always worrying out these little black and white squares in my head, and when I'm not, my eyes are always busy. I am for ever and ever arranging and re-arranging."

July 9th, referring to a visitor in the afternoon: ". . . She had never heard of Schumann's songs. Didn't know he wrote songs. When people tell me that sort of thing, I always look at them more closely —perhaps I may not have looked at them at all before. I usually discover something curious in their heads or faces, which gives them an incomplete air. I am not a physiognomist. . . . I have to fudge at a face until I get the expression I want. I suppose a dose of 'Bell's Anatomy of Expression,' taken at a tender age, cured me of any desire to draw after a receipt. . . . I like to do my own observing. . . ."

Wednesday, 10th.—". . . In the evening yesterday I read *The Deserted Village* aloud to Mrs. Barnard, and I think I have just the things for it. It will be easy, and I can be getting ready for another play while I am doing it, and all the dresses and costumes are here and the places and all." . . . *The Deserted Village* drawings, as it happened, were to be one of Abbey's disappointments. Not only were there delays and postponements with regard to the commission and publication, but the reproductions were unsatisfactory; and this was the more regrettable because he never did more beautiful or sympathetic work.

A RIVER HOLIDAY

Mr. and Mrs. Millet, after returning from America in June, had gone for a visit to Paris. On July 20th Abbey writes: ". . . They all come back this evening and perhaps are bringing 'old Ved' with them. Do you know Vedder? I forget. He is a real genius, a queer, original chap, full of out-of-the-way knowledge and with the most original ideas. . . ." Of another artist he wrote in the same letter: "Having lived for so many years the best of a small circle of inferior men, through lack of appreciation and through being surrounded by people who did not in the least know what he was driving at, he has not had strength enough to rise above things. I don't think there can be a more debilitating thing than an inferior audience."

Work was varied by a little amusement. One evening in July Abbey was in London to see Verdi's *Otello* at Covent Garden; on another he entertained Mr. Harry Harper, du Maurier, Black and Osgood; the next he dined at the Reform with James Payn and T.B. Aldrich. Later in the month he was joined by Mr. Thomas Manson, on a little rowing holiday, which he thus described to Miss Mead: "July 27th. —The George, Wallingford. . . . Yesterday Manson and I started early from Salter's Wharf (Oxford) down the river in a half-out-rigged dingey. . . I pulled about fifteen miles. Manson's hands were sore and he couldn't pull much. I didn't mind. . . . I sketched the barmaid and landlord and landlady last night. . . . You'd be amused at the brisk life in these little inns. They are as clean as clean, and you are made one of the family at once. There was quite a gathering in the yard yesterday evening, shelling peas when we came. The family and the landlord's daughter's young man and two young boating chaps in Oxford colours. . . ." "July 30th.—. . . .We pulled from Caversham down through Shiplake and Wargrave and Henley and Medmenham and Bisham and Marlow and Cookham—it was very beautiful—and finished up at Maidenhead by pulling the boat out of water and over the rollers instead of putting it through the lock. . . . I suppose there are people who cannot understand the delight of feeling all their muscles working strongly and intelligently. . . . I do not think there is anything like pulling a well-built boat, if you *are* well, and I *am amazingly* well. . . .

E. A. ABBEY.

AGE THIRTY-SEVEN.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN THE STUDIO AT BROADWAY, IN 1889, BY HIS FRIEND, HAROLD ROLLER.

Now first published.

"July 31st.—. . . We saw the little houseboat the Daniels have—Henry Daniel of Worcester College, Oxford. . . . He is certainly a very interesting man, of the kind I used to see a good deal of when I used to go to the Savile. There they were in a little houseboat [*The Moorhen*]—he and Mrs. Daniel and his little girls, Rachel and Ruth. Did I ever show you *The Garland of Rachel?* Daniel has a private press and prints little things—opuscules is the word, I believe—and when Rachel was born, Daniel got his friends, Lang, Lewis Carroll, Dobson, Gosse, Mary Robinson, Humphry Ward, Robert Bridges, Locker, Sir Richard Harrington, and others, each to write her a little welcoming into the world sort of poem. . . ."

"August 7th.—. . . I must go away to-day and be busy for a while with that blessed *Tosca*. Leme has departed, and I miss him greatly, but he became quite unreasonably independent. I wonder whom I shall have in his place. I had got so used to him that he understood just what I wanted, and I always dread a new model. . . . I did a figure from the new girl on Saturday. . . It is for *The Deserted Village*, and is part of the group under the thorn tree. . . . 'The hawthorn bush with seats beneath the shade.' She is a graceful girl and very suggestive."—This drawing (upon which Abbey is seen at work in the fine photograph which Mr. Harold Roller made of him about this time in the studio of Russell House) was the only one, except the "Village Master," ever published of all those done in this year of 1889, the others being thrown aside as not wholly to his mind. Nor was this one published as a part of *The Deserted Village*, either in the magazine or the book, Abbey deeming the figure too delicate and too refined for a village maiden. Later he made another drawing of the same subject to replace it, and published the first one privately, some years after, under the title "Sweet Nellie, my Heart's Delight," from a plate the full size of the drawing, made for him by Dujardin of Paris.

The next letter is dated August 10th, and was written at Purley Hall, Reading, where Abbey was the guest of Mr., now Sir, John Hare. "We have talked *Tosca* until I am sick of her. Hare certainly reads it remarkably well, and is full of enthusiasm. I have got the dresses pretty well settled if I can only settle on the stuffs. We started

out immediately after breakfast, yesterday, with fishing things—and I hate to fish—and sat in a punt nearly all day by Mapledurham weir. It rained pitchforks all day. Hare got some big jack—five. I didn't get but one little one. This is a beautiful old place. It is late seventeenth century. There are panelled rooms and stone mullions and escutcheons. The dining room has a great coat of arms in the ceiling —white plaster. There is a formal old garden with a curious sundial held up by a kneeling figure, and there are smooth lawns with great trees, stretching away to the top of the wooded hills about. . . ."

For some time Abbey's letters have had references to his tentative efforts to acquire the theory and practice of cricket, which later he was to love so well. To vary work a few minutes' hard throwing and catching a ball had already become a custom with him; but latterly he had been batting too, and now he was on the eve of his first match, the sides being the Russell House XI. against an XI. brought together by Sir George Colthurst, at Norton Hall, Michelton, the residence of his sister, Mrs. Bruce. The match was played on August 16th in very wet weather, and Russell House was badly beaten. Of Abbey's maiden effort no record has been preserved. Cricket, he tells Miss Mead, "is a much more skilful game—the batting part —than baseball, and I don't know how to hold the bat right yet." For an artist whose livelihood depended upon his right hand he was curiously reckless in the field, throwing incredibly hard himself and catching balls thrown by others with their utmost force. This very summer he put a finger out of joint, and damaged himself not a little; but he was not to be deterred. "No game's really a game," he wrote, "unless it's a little dangerous."

"August 21st.—. . . Haines [the vet] had his old musical friends [at the studio]—a little, bent old man with a 'cello, an old farmer and his son from Buckland with clarionettes, and Haines with a fiddle, and their old, long, narrow music books. They played the oldest-fashioned things, and it was more like Hardy than anything you ever saw in your life. Then the old man piped up in his quavering voice and sang and accompanied himself on the fiddle. 'There bain't many instruments but I knows the notes on 'em,' says he. He is the clerk

THE VILLAGE MASTER.

"THE VILLAGE MASTER TAUGHT HIS LITTLE SCHOOL.

. . . . . .

FULL WELL THEY LAUGHED WITH COUNTERFEITED GLEE
AT ALL HIS JOKES, FOR MANY A JOKE HAD HE."

Seven and a half inches by five and three-quarter inches.

1889

"THE DESERTED VILLAGE."

GOLDSMITH.

of the Saintsbury church, and is to play there next Sunday. . . Just think how interesting it will be to know them and to know their side of it. . . ."

In this month Abbey engaged a new model who was to work for him from time to time for many years—the famous Angelo Colarossi, the Italian, who died quite recently, and in his time had posed for Carpeaux, the French sculptor, and for Gérome, and was now much in Leighton's service. He was, for example, the athlete with the python in the P.R.A.'s famous group of statuary. Colarossi was the brother of the head of the art school in Paris, and his fine figure occurs again and again in Abbey's drawings. Both in and out of the studio he conducted himself in such a way that he not only raised the status of the model, but came to be respected and beloved both by artists and by his fellow models.

"August 31st.—. . . We are all for cricket now. The three Rollers are here—W.E., the one who took the team of English gentlemen to America, and Trevor and Harold—and I am afraid we are going to be altogether too fine on Monday when we play Sir George Colthurst's eleven again . . . September 3rd.—. . . Yesterday the eventful cricket match came off, and it was a great day, and we beat them by an innings and twenty runs." This return match was played in a field adjoining the grounds of Russell House, where the village cricket was played and where the annual sports were held.

"And here is a letter from dear Cousin Jo. She was so good to me and brought out all that was best in those growing years of mine, when I spent all my evenings with her and used to practise making 'Herrick' lettering in the library with them all at the old home in Brooklyn. . . .

"Menzel will be a great man for all time to come.

"I can't think what a man [an artist] wants with a medal he has to ask for. [Referring to medals in Paris 1889 International Exhibition.] I dare say when one meets a man who has written clever books, and he seems a dull person, it is often that he has been the mouthpiece of his better half. . . ." This was some years before Sir James Barrie wrote *What Every Woman Knows*.

"September 4th.—. . . Why can't we always be amiable and yielding? I wonder if this time of year isn't always a little worn. We have been as green and fresh as we can be, and when the leaves begin to get tired of it, and to curl up and allow themselves to drop off, maybe we do too, unless we are careful. We all 'do fade as a leaf,' I dare say. . . .

"September 7th, Birmingham [where Mr. Hare was acting].—I have come over with the *Tosca* things, having completed all the sketches for the principals, and hope to-day to get rid of most of it. Such a worrying thing as it has been. . . We went to see the 'Profligate,' and after it had supper with Hare and Robertson."

"September 10th.—. . . I am not a delicate, artistic plant, sensitive, and not to be rudely handled. The more tired out I am the clearer my head seems to get and the more sensitive my hand. That day at Birmingham, with Hare and Forbes Robertson, when we worked out the *Tosca* from beginning to end with no lunch, was most inspiriting, and I had a curious mental excitement after it that I don't get here. It is *doing* things that excites me, with active and appreciative minds about. . . ."

Mr. Sargent, his mother, and sisters had taken Fladbury Rectory for three months—a very beautiful terraced house above the Avon, about seven miles from Broadway. Alfred Parsons was also staying there, and M. Helleu, the dry-point portrait etcher, also well known as a painter, Miss Violet Paget ("Vernon Lee"), Miss Flora Priestley, and other guests, and Abbey went over for a few days in September. The next letter describes his visit:

"September 19th.—. . . Early on Tuesday I drove over to Fladbury, taking my belongings, and in the afternoon I began the background of my picture the 'Callers' [later named the "Visitors"], and have progressed well with it. . . . It is only two people come to make a call and sitting in front of the old red-brick house, with roses growing over it, and a maid in pink calico taking in their cards. It has no intellectual quality whatever in its conception. . . . I got tired of everything I was doing, and this rests me. I have worked hard both the afternoons and in the mornings. I have been making sketches in Cropthorne Church. One I shall use for *The Deserted Village*. It is

a beautiful old place, with grey carved pews—old pews, Gothic ones —and there are two good monuments. I shall do, I think, a little water-colour of a girl sitting in church.... The colour is charming ...an old pale stone tomb, with two [full-length recumbent figures, their] heads on pillows and several of the sons (they seem to have had eighteen children) straggling around the corner, for whom there is not room in front. The wall behind her [the girl] is whitewashed, and the pew is of grey wood—green out of the window. Cropthorne is full of beautiful bits, and it is nice to go to—to see. [The water-colour here described was never finished. Even in its immature state it is charming.]. . . . Alfred was at Sargent's until yesterday. He is going back to Aix next month, and after that will come to America with me. Poor boy! He is plucky and patient. We are a queer lot, I should think, and moody and irrational at times, but I like us.... I don't believe in your critical, learned amateurs. . . . I don't think they ought to express decided opinions about things until they have earned a right to have them."

[Added in London]. "I am sitting in the beautiful big library of the Reform, and it is growing late in the dull autumn day. It is drizzling outside, and the big chestnut trees out of the window in Carlton Gardens are dripping. The room is big and shadowy, the gilded bindings on the bookshelves gleam faintly in the dusk, and the gilded flutings of the green columns shine dimly all down the long, dim places. A few old gentlemen are dozing over their books, and one or two others are writing away like mad: the scratching of quills and the rumbling of wheels away off somewhere are the only sounds....

"September 22nd, Fladbury Rectory, Pershore.—I wonder if this will be cheerful writing. I am sitting in a big window in my bedroom here, looking across the terrace, across the ripply river with the rain pattering upon it, across some wide water meadows with rows of little willows, and at the farther side brush fires, with the smoke blowing low across the landscape, and, behind, Wood Norton, and over all soft grey clouds. There are a lot of girls in the drawing-room —one is singing 'Kathleen Mavourneen'—which doesn't make things more lively. Little Miss Playfair is here too, and plays the

piano remarkably well (they are singing 'Auld Robin Gray' now —my goodness). I am rather pleased with what I have done here, although it isn't quite done, and it looks unlike what other people do, I think.... Here, John thinks just of nothing at all else [but his painting] and is always trying and trying and working at something. . . . He is absolutely sincere and earnest. He is coming to America with Alfred and me, and we must find a place somewhere in which to work. . . . I hope to finish this thing here either to-day or to-morrow.... I keep longing lately, because I haven't seen many people, I suppose, for some sympathetic conversation, and here with John I am all right, because we differ enough to argue interestedly, and not enough to disagree absolutely. And also I like, for a change, the other thing, too—boys like the Rollers—good chaps—who live out of doors, and know how to do other things.... I am beginning to think I do not pay as much attention to the young chaps as I ought to do—as the older ones used to pay to me long ago. . . .

"Tuesday, 24th.—... Last night we—John and I—talked about what we ought to do until away on in the small hours—talked and talked—and I am always refreshed by him. . . . He may paint a nude in New York, if he can find any good figure, and thinks I ought to do the same—that it would widen me out to paint—rather over life size —a large, pale, fattish, nude woman with no particular drawing in her. I never painted from the nude at all—*think of that!* . . .

"September 28th, Russell House.—. . . I worked yesterday at Fladbury until it was time to drive over, and just at dinner time the Whites [Stanford White, the architect, of the firm of McKim, Mead and White] came, and I have been showing them the village ever since, and am going up on the 2.37 train in order to be at the Lyceum to-night—Irving's first night....

" October 5th, Bedford Gardens.—. . . I have been absolutely driven to death this week, night and day. . . . Hare has suddenly—not quite suddenly, but suddenly enough to make it extremely awkward for me—put the whole production—by which is meant the arrangement of colour and *all* the dresses—nearly 150—upon my shoulders, and as I don't feel particularly well—I am livery, I should

think, from the lack of exercise at Fladbury—I feel the weight of the undertaking. . . . I hate the expense of being here—one is let in for all sorts of things, and can't help it. My studio is littered with rolls and samples of silks and velvets and satins, and I spend hours matching them together and trying combinations, which is not at all what I thought of when I told Hare I shouldn't mind doing the dresses, etc. I've had the furniture and effects of light and all the rest. Hare was with me all day yesterday. . . I had had a model 'ordered,' to sit for a couple of figures in *The Comedy of Errors*, so I had to draw all the evening and went to sleep in a chair about eleven. . . .

"Saturday.—I am still at these blessed clothes, and, thank goodness, I've nearly done. . . . I can't seem to work well here. Ever since this place began to assume proportions, things have become complicated, and I long to be away from it so soon as I get inside the door. . . . I worked again all last evening at *The Comedy of Errors* after spending the day with costumiers. I want to get on with those water-colours. They are in such an interesting stage, and I am sure that one will be good, if I can only get it done before all the flowers go. . . . I am very much afraid that Alfred won't be able to come over with me. His throat has troubled him greatly this autumn so far, and Semon says he must go directly to Aix and stop there until he is well on the mend. . . . I wanted very much to have him with me this winter. . . . I only catch glimpses of him. . . .

"October 9th, Bedford Gardens.—. . . I went down to Broadway and spent Sunday, getting all the women together—sixteen. I chose all the stuffs and things and made drawings for each individual. I wish I could do things a little less conscientiously. . . . I wanted to walk on Sunday, but had not the time. . . . I came up on Monday and worked all the evening again . . . and yesterday took the last drawings to Hare, and picked over the 'extra' people who are to wear them. They only wanted thirty-five and I should think there must have been five hundred applicants. I spent the afternoon hunting over military uniforms, and nearly all to-day I have been bossing cuts of coats and things. . . . I shall hope to see it well over this week and the shoes and wigs, too. . . . My goodness me! I'm tired

of being tired, and wish I could get about and play football or something. . . .

"October 12th, Bedford Gardens.—. . . I have acquired a rather rare disease known as 'shingles,' which keeps me awake o' nights and wears me down nervously and makes me tired all over. . . . In the midst of all this are these everlasting frocks and wigs and coats and hats and boots for the *Tosca*. . . .

"October 16th.—. . . I am so very weak that I can scarcely sit up all day, but I go about and get through with my work in a sense. . . . To-day I finished the pattern to go round the *Tosca* frocks—alternating lyres and girls holding a laurel wreath—two girls flying at a lyre across the 'chest.' . . .

"October 19th.—. . . Yesterday I went down to that theatre in the morning and saw all my background people dressed in my sketches. It was quite curious to see them all dressed in my colours . . . and then I stayed and heard the music for the first act. . . Sometimes any music is resting and maybe that is why I sat, as one sees so many idlers doing abroad in the churches, and soared away into space for a while. . . .

"October 22nd, Broadway.—. . . I am so much better that I just drop a line to relieve you. . . . Dobson is down, and he is very nice. He knows such a lot of things that interest me. . . . I wish I hadn't to go up to look after those frocks any more, but I *must*. . . .

"October 26th, Russell House.—. . . I am getting on so very well with my work. I think you will think some of it the best I've done. I've nearly finished three of *The Comedy of Errors* and mean to finish the lot before I go over. . . .

"October 30th.—. . . I have put the sky in of 'Corinna' . . .

"November 2nd.—. . . I've written all this without saying at first what I have on my mind to tell you, for fear it would seem conceited. 'Corinna' is really getting quite good, and she is much admired by the audience here. . . . 'Corinna's' head is finished. . . . I wrote to John Hay to tell him how very remarkable I thought the November instalment of the Lincoln. I wish I had written it!" The *Life of Lincoln*, by John G. Nicolay and John Hay, was then running serially in the *Century* magazine.

ADRIANA, LUCIANA, ANTIPHOLUS EROTES, DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

ADRIANA: "AY, AY, ANTIPHOLUS, LOOK STRANGE AND FROWN."

Eighteen inches by eleven and a half inches.

1889.

"THE COMEDY OF ERRORS," ACT II, SCENE II.

"November 6th, Bedford Gardens.—... I've had a wretched cold, which kept me in bed nearly all day yesterday, making me late for an appointment with Mrs. Nettleship, where I had to see the Court ladies' dresses tried on. I found the place filled with them, and it was quite odd seeing all one's sketches carried out—life-size. There were a dozen or so, and there was the wig-maker and the stage manager and the dressers and a mob altogether. I 'braced up' and went at it, and really I think the result will be extremely pretty.... Then I went to the other costumier and saw most of the men—wretched stuff, so bad that I was in despair. I decided finally to take the things away from him—with Hare's consent—and put them elsewhere, and I had lent them my old original things to copy, too... Then some hours later I went to the theatre and saw all the people dressed whom Barthe had to look after; some of them remarkably good; a lot of peasants he had taken the trouble to send to Italy to get original dresses for; and, after two hours of this, home to bed. And, to-day, down to the costumiers we had the row with, saw a lot of the things tried on, and, after more row, took most of them away from him—much to his disgust, to put it mildly—and then to Nathan, who does the officers and soldiers, and who has undertaken to do all the rest in a very short time, and then down to the theatre and saw the first act set... and the whole act rehearsed afterwards. It is a tiring business —very tiring...."

During the next fortnight Abbey was chiefly at Broadway recovering from his illness and working against time. *La Tosca* was fixed for November 28th, and on the 27th we find the artist writing at the Reform Club: "Up half the night with these dress rehearsals, and carrying on my work during the day—double day's work nearly—for I have a young chap putting together and elaborating architectural details downstairs, who has to be looked after hourly, and yesterday I thought my brain would give way. Architectural man hard at work, women rearranging dresses in another room, model sitting, and *four* hours of interviewer from the *Pall Mall Gazette*. I hardly know what I said to the latter, and, under the circumstances, I didn't like to turn him out. If I'd only myself to consider these days I should have

turned him out, but I shouldn't like anything nasty republished in the American papers. I'd not much dinner, and at 6.30 was at the theatre, looking after the 'make up' of all those people, and home, after some bacon and eggs at the Beefsteak, at *2.30*. I shall be out of the wood to-morrow night, and you will be pleased to hear I shall try to keep to my own trade hereafter. I can't *half* do things. They must be well done—thoroughly done—or I don't care to have anything to do with them, in fact I *can't*. . . . *As You Like It* is all planned out. . . I cabled to-day that I am coming on the, or about the, 20th. . .

" November 30th, Bedford Gardens.—. . . I feel a sort of reaction after the nervous rush and strain of the *Tosca* production. The play was a great success, and Hare's dismal forebodings were unfulfilled. I worked very hard to get every detail as perfect as I could, and it has been an experience, and I am glad I've had it and that it is over at last. I think everybody admired what I did—and it did look well."—Abbey's opinion is shared by the critics generally. Sir John Hare, writing to me about it, says: "I venture to think that, thanks to Abbey's genius, no finer stage picture of the revolutionary period was ever presented. Working with him was a privilege and a delight."

"December 4th.—. . . I am just finishing *The Comedy of Errors* and am beginning *As You Like It*. I went the other night to see the wrestling at the Aquarium with Harold and Trevor Roller, and got some good tips for the first drawing, and I shall surely finish this before I go. I have told Osgood to engage my passage by the *Fulda* for the 26th, from Southampton. . . . It is nice to have Alfred back. He came on Sunday, looking so thin and pale, but he is cheerful and very kind and thoughtful for me, and I am correspondingly grateful. . . . 'Corinna' has arrived from Broadway. . . . Alfred is very pleased with her. . . .

"December 17th.—. . . It is the *big*, underlying, strong, and deep impulses of thoughtful folk that are worth consideration. . . . I began so heedlessly and unconsciously my artistic career that I can only see *now* that the thing that has been of the greatest interest to me all these years is the personal, sympathetic quality of my little people.

IN THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

ROSALIND : "O JUPITER, HOW WEARY ARE MY SPIRITS!"
CLOWN : "I CARE NOT FOR MY SPIRITS, IF MY LEGS WERE NOT WEARY."
CELIA : "I PRAY YOU, BEAR WITH ME; I CANNOT GO NO FURTHER."

Twenty-one inches by fourteen inches

1889.

"AS YOU LIKE IT," ACT II, SCENE IV.

I know that unless, within five minutes after beginning to make a drawing, the little soul within doesn't begin to make itself manifest upon the paper, my interest flags and generally ceases altogether, until the little eyes begin to twinkle or the little lips to smile. . . .

"December 19th.—... Ideas crowd themselves in my head, and I shall never live to do all I have thought of, of late. I don't mean ill-considered work. I could never do anything—put anything out—that was not done seriously—and my best. I've had visions of 'Dimmesdale' [in *The Scarlet Letter*] looking at himself alone in his chamber, with the lighted candles either side of his face; and visions of 'Fiammetta' and the gay Florentines [in *The Decameron*] sitting about in a beautiful old garden, chatting, and looking charming; and visions of 'The Good-Natured Man' and of my 'Blondel' gentleman in red, who is to be left behind—perhaps. But I don't suppose it *is* creation. There never was but one creator, and one is harassed with doubts about *him*. Most things that have been achieved—created—have been the outcome of some previous succession of circumstances. I suppose I'm visionary, but I'm paying off my debts. . . . Is this the last line I shall send you from here? . . . Three models to-day and my young architect."

It may be said here that, for the best of reasons, the debts were not wholly paid off until 1895, but after that year insolvency became an unknown factor in Abbey's life.

CHAPTER XXII

MARRIAGE

1890 Aged 38

Abbey Again in New York—Friendly Feastings—A Dinner to Charles Parsons—The Wedding

WHEN the eventful year 1890 dawned it found Abbey on the Atlantic, approaching New York. He had sailed from Southampton in the ss. *Fulda* on December 26th, and, after a very stormy passage, landed on January 4th. To his consternation he found Miss Mead laid up with pneumonia, which had followed an attack of influenza, that scourge, from which the country had been immune for many years, having suddenly reappeared. The crisis, however, was past, and she was soon on the road to recovery. Their engagement followed and was at once announced.

Abbey's purpose being to remain in New York until his marriage, he took a studio—a large, lofty room in the building of *The Judge* Publishing Co., at the north-west corner of 16th Street and 5th Avenue. Into this studio Stanford White put, from among his various stored collections, old tapestries, chairs and tables, easels and all that was necessary to make the bare room a convenient and pleasant place to work in, and this was the beginning of the welcome the artist received from old friends and fellow workers, from his publishers, and from various artistic bodies in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston.

There was much feasting, but there was also much hard work. He pushed on vigorously with "Corinna" and finished it in time to send it, under its new title "May-Day Morning," to London for the spring exhibition of the Royal Academy. That he should have turned to oils and mastered them so swiftly caused much excitement among his artist friends in New York. Not the least of these was his beloved old art editor, Charles Parsons, who was heard one day to exclaim, with pride in his voice, "What strides he has already

MAY DAY MORNING.

OIL.

Five feet nine and a half inches by three feet two and a half inches.

1890–1894.

When "A May Day Morning" was exhibited at the Royal Academy, in 1890, the background was a road. In 1894 the painter substituted a background from his garden at Fairford, beginning his work at sunrise for the early-morning effect

made in this new medium! His first efforts seemed almost like the painting of a man who had never learned to draw." This was Abbey's first exhibit at the Royal Academy, with the single exception of the pen-and-ink drawing of the "Milkmaid" in 1885. As, however, engravers alone among black-and-white artists were recognised as eligible for membership in this body, he refused to exhibit in that medium again, thus making his protest against the exclusion of this important branch of art. Later on, when, after exhibiting one more oil painting ("Fiammetta's Song," in 1894), he became himself an Associate Member of the R.A., he exhibited pen-and-ink drawings whenever possible, never ceasing to press the claims of this branch of his art, and in the last year of his life was full of hope that he was to see the claim recognised in the immediate future.

He finished, also in New York, his water-colour, "The Visitors," begun at Fladbury, and sent it to the spring exhibition of the American Water Colour Society, where it was sold at the private view to Mr. F. Havemeyer. He also finished the drawings for *As You Like It*, published in the magazine in December of this year, and, from time to time, took up again his water-colour "Mariana in the Moated Grange," and made a drawing for a story by H.C. Bunner—"Crazy Wife's Ship"—which, however, was not published in the magazine until December, 1892.

While in New York he had been the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Manson, at 325 Madison Avenue, and before he returned to England he painted in oil, as a memento of his visit, a decorative panel for an overmantel in Mrs. Manson's drawing-room. He painted also in oil a large decoration for an hotel in New York, "The Amsterdam," on the corner of 32nd Street and Broadway. This commission came through the architect of the building, Stanford White. Abbey chose as his subject "A Game of Bowls on the Bowling Green at the Battery on New York Bay during the Early Days of the Dutch Settlement," and completed it in about three weeks, with the assistance of Mr. Charles Mente.

There was no longer any Tile Club to welcome Abbey, because that genial fraternity was no more; but many of the Tilers were

now members of the Salmagundi Club, which entertained its member (Abbey was made an honorary member in 1884) with proper ceremony. The gathering, which was on January 17th in the club building at 121 5th Avenue, was not only cordial but high spirited, and in honour of the return of the native a burlesque exhibition of modern art had been prepared, the travestied painters including Jean François Millet and J.M.W.Turner, while a concert, chiefly humorous, was presented. Among the entertainers, for example, was Mr.E.W.Kemble, the illustrator of *Uncle Remus*, impersonating a monkey on a barrel organ. In the same month, on January 23rd, a banquet was given in honour of Abbey at the Union League Club by Messrs. Harper and Brothers, represented by Mr.J.Henry Harper, and on the back of Abbey's *menu* card are the following names: F. Hopkinson Smith, Charles Parsons, Frederick Mead (Abbey's father-in-law), Lawrence Hutton, Jack de Thulstrup, John Foord, R. M. Hunt, C.D.Weldon, C.Graham, W.H.Patten, H.W.McVickar, W.H.Harper, Frederick Remington, J.D.Jarrold Kelley, H.M. Alden, Lafcadio Hearn, W.D.Howells, F.D.Millet, J.Henry Harper, Edwin A.Abbey, A.B.Frost, J.Alden Weir, Thomas L.Manson, Jr., W.M.Chase, Charles W.Truslow, Charles Fairchild, Stanford White, H.R.Harper, F.B.Schell (Charles Parsons's successor in the Art Department), and W.A.Rogers.

On March 8th there was a reception to Abbey and John Sargent at the Art Club in Philadelphia, after which Abbey insisted that there was not a man in Philadelphia with whom he had not shaken hands on that evening, and that he had a new idea of its immense population. On March 25th he was charmingly entertained by the boys and girls of "The Art Students' League," and on April 15th a dinner was given to Charles Parsons, which was organised by Abbey, De Thulstrup, W.T.Smedley, and W.A.Rogers. Abbey presided, with his old art editor on his right and George Wm. Curtis on his left, and during the evening a portfolio was presented to the guest of honour, containing drawings and tributes by his old associates. Abbey's *menu* card is thus endorsed: Charles Parsons, Edwin A.Abbey, George William Curtis, F.D.Millet, R.Swain Gifford, Frederick Dielman,

THE WANDERING MINSTREL.

WATER-COLOUR.

1890-1891.

Harry Fenn, W. Hamilton Gibson, R. R. Sinclair, Jos. Thorne Harper, W. A. Rogers, John W. Alexander, Frederick Remington, W. Poinsette Snyder, J. A. S. Symington, Charles Mente, Allen C. Redwood, Benjamin Day, C. R. Parsons, A. B. Frost, Charles Dudley Warner, J. Henry Harper, A. B. Stavey, H. M. Alden, J. O. Davidson, W. H. Patten, "for old times," H. A. Ogden, W. T. Smedley, John Harper, and Fred B. Schell. These names comprise much of what was most vital in American black-and-white art at that time. We shall meet Charles Parsons again in the course of this narrative, but it may be mentioned here that he lived for another twenty years, dying in 1910 at the advanced age of eighty-nine.

While being similarly fêted in Boston, Abbey stayed two days with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fairchild, and there met Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery Sears. After Abbey's return from Boston to New York, in a note to Miss Mead, he writes: "Sears came to-day and said he'd like to have the girl singing under the tree—the sketch I made on Sunday—2,000 dols. . . . I hope it will be worth that. He wants it in September. I hope he'll get it." This was the water-colour "The Wandering Minstrel," finished in London early in 1891.

In March a very successful exhibition of drawings for *Old Songs*, *The Quiet Life*, and Wordsworth's Sonnets, by Abbey and Alfred Parsons, was held at Reichard's Gallery, 226 Fifth Avenue; and later the exhibition was repeated (of those not sold in New York) in Philadelphia.

A letter from John Hay indicates with happy precision the artist's other and dominating interest at this time. The date is February 12th, 1890: "As the newspapers have now trumpeted your happiness to the universe, I suppose I may be permitted to say how glad Mrs. Hay and I are at the good news. . . . I was much disappointed in not finding you in New York. I sought you at your own lair in 5th Avenue, and searched for you in vain at the monthly meeting of the *Century*. But the ways of an engaged man are past finding out, and I have no doubt you were infinitely better employed on both occasions. . . . Will you visit Washington before you sail? It is highly recommended for *voyages de noces*."

THE WEDDING

The wedding was celebrated at the house of Miss Mead's parents, No. 1 West 56th Street, on April 22nd, when Mr. Sargent was one of the ushers. It was a momentous day indeed in Abbey's life, for it provided him with the loyalest friend and most constant stimulus and inspirer that a man can ever have had.

Abbey was reticent concerning his deeper emotions, but a pamphlet (to be dealt with fully later on), the author of which had never seen him, his home, or any member of his family, entitled "Little Journeys to the Homes of Eminent Artists," evoked from him an expression of feeling which, though it belongs to 1902, I should like to quote here. Concerning a statement there printed, to the effect that Mrs. Abbey's only thought was to minister to her household, Abbey wrote to his old friend Laffan: "As you know—all of you—I owe so much of whatever I have achieved to her who has been to me such a faithful ally and comrade, and without whose steady encouragement, help and inspiration I never in this world could have reached whatever I have reached, that a remark like this is little less than insulting. She has kept so much in the background that I feel positively ashamed that those she knew before I took her should think that through me she had become a mere *hausfrau*." And on the margin of the pamphlet itself, Abbey wrote in 1910, after over twenty years of married happiness, more strongly still: "I will say in conclusion that it was entirely owing to the encouragement of my wife that I began to paint seriously at all, and that her high intellectual equipment and her sympathetic companionship and resourceful assistance have carried my work far beyond what it must have been without these inestimable aids. A painter's finished work is given to the world, and the public generally may see it, but very few can know whence his greatest inspirations and his highest aspirations have been drawn. In saying this I am doing but scant justice to one who has been my daily and hourly companion and counsellor and friend these twenty years."

CHAPTER XXIII

AN ACKNOWLEDGED MASTER

Taking Stock—Henry James on Abbey—The Paris Exhibition—A French Critic —Meissonier and Edmond de Goncourt—Pennell's *Pen Drawing and Pen Draughtsmanship*—The Masters of Modern Illustration—Menzel and Abbey—Beginning of the " Comedies "

AT the time of his marriage Edwin Austin Abbey was just thirty-eight years of age, and before him were twenty-one years of unceasing activity and steady advance in his art—a span which was to see him achieve the highest distinction, both in the country of his birth and the country of his residence, as a painter of historical pictures and imaginative mural decorations.

Since the preceding year had brought to him official Continental recognition through his drawings at the great Paris Exhibition, and had launched him as an illustrator of Shakespeare (the first of the "Comedies" had just been published in *Harper's Magazine*, in December, 1889), and had witnessed his early efforts to master the mystery of oil painting, this becomes a fitting point—while he pauses between the old medium and the new—to take note of the illustrator's position as a black-and-white draughtsman which he had made for himself.

In an earlier chapter, in the account of Broadway, has been quoted Henry James's appreciation on that serene Worcestershire haven. The article from which the extracts are taken was printed in *Harper's Magazine* for June of this year, 1889, under the title "Our Artists in Europe"—"our" meaning not America's artists but the magazine's; for, in addition to Millet, Abbey (with the crayon portrait by Mr. Sargent which is reproduced in this biography), Boughton and Reinhart, George du Maurier and Alfred Parsons were included. Of Abbey as an artist Henry James wrote with the warmest admiration, and with all his sensitive scientific precision. I quote a

little: "There is no paucity about Mr. Abbey as a virtuoso in black-and-white, and if one thing more than another sets the seal upon the quality of his work, it is the rare abundance in which it is produced. It is not a frequent thing to find combinations infinite as well as exquisite. Mr. Abbey has so many ideas, and the gates of composition have been opened so wide to him that we cultivate his company with a mixture of confidence and excitement. . . . The beautiful art and taste, the admirable execution, strike the hour with the same note; but the figure, the scene, is ever a fresh conception. Never was ripe skill less mechanical, and never was the faculty of perpetual evocation less addicted to prudent economies. Mr. Abbey never saves for the next picture, yet the next picture will be as expansive as the last. . . .

"I may as well frankly declare that I have such a taste for Mr. Abbey's work that I cannot affect a judicial tone about it. Criticism is appreciation or it is nothing. . . . It is important to translate as adequately as possible the positive side of Mr. Abbey's activity. None to-day is more charming, and none helps us more to take the large, joyous, observant, various view of the business of art. He has enlarged the idea of illustration, and he plays with it in a hundred spontaneous, ingenious ways. 'Truth and poetry' is the motto that is legibly stamped upon his pencil-case, for if he has on the one side a singular sense of the familiar, salient, importunate facts of life, on the other, they reproduce themselves in his mind in a delightfully qualifying medium. It is that medium that the fond observer must especially envy Mr. Abbey, and that a literary observer will envy him most of all. . . . A charming story-teller indeed he would be who should write as Mr. Abbey draws. . . . It is true that what the verbal artist would like to do would be to find out the secret of the pictorial, to drink at the same fountain. Mr. Abbey is essentially one of those who would tell us if he could, and conduct us to the magic spring; but here he is, in the nature of the case, helpless, for the happy *ambiente*, as the Italians call it, in which his creations move is exactly the thing, as I take it, that he can least give an account of. It is a matter of genius and imagination."—When one reads such a tribute as this, conscious

of all its underlying friendliness, Stevenson's phrase, in his rhyming letter, "Henry James, the prince of men," rings through the chambers of the brain.*

Sixteen of the drawings for *Old Songs* formed part of the American exhibit in the great Paris Exhibition of this year, 1889. An article on America's contribution, in *Harper's* for September, by Theodore Child, ends with a reference to the Abbey drawings, of which this is the concluding sentence: "This century has produced four incomparable draughtsmen with the pen: their names are Meissonier, Menzel, Vierge and Abbey."

For his work shown at the great exhibition Abbey was, as has been said, awarded the first-class medal. A French critic, M. André Saglio, commenting at the time upon the drawings for the *Old Songs*, in which he found an "incroyable finesse," described their creator as "un homme petit, vigoureux, à l'œil vif, à la conversation enjouée et pleine de saillies." Meissonier, according to Mr. Theodore Child, after seeing Abbey's drawings, expressed the opinion that a special Medaille d'Honneur should be created to comprise black-and-white, in order rightly to recognise the work of "a little man" (as he expressed it) "walking up and down in America who is the king of us all"; while among Abbey's other French admirers was Edmond de Goncourt, who bought a copy of *She Stoops to Conquer*, and greatly prized it. It was of de Goncourt, who spent a fortune on acquiring beautiful things, and of Abbey that a Frenchman said: "De Goncourt has collected the eighteenth century; Abbey has recreated it."

In Mr. Joseph Pennell's monograph, *Pen Drawing and Pen Draughtsmanship*, which appeared later in 1889, with a drawing from *She Stoops to Conquer* as frontispiece, Abbey holds a high place. After stating that it is the duty of every illustrator and everyone who cares for illustrations to own the *Herrick*, *She Stoops to Conquer* and *Old Songs*, the author adds that as a whole *Old Songs* is infinitely Abbey's finest work to date. Since the criticisms are based

* It should be mentioned that the article on Broadway and *Harper's* artists in Europe, together with that on Abbey in *Harper's Weekly*, in 1886, from which quotations have earlier been made, were collected, with a few others, by Henry James, in a little volume called *Picture and Text*, in 1893.

upon the body of Abbey's work already before us, I quote further from this first serious attempt in England to give pen-drawing its due. "While the superficial qualities of Abbey's work [Mr. Pennell wrote] can be imitated by anyone, his rendering of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which he has reconstructed so wonderfully, will never be approached on the lines he is following. His present position as an illustrator has been attained and maintained simply by treating illustration, as it should be treated, as seriously as any other branch of art. He is remarkable not so much for academic correctness—as is Menzel, for example—but rather for his truth, the beauty of his line and his power of expression. No illustrator has realised more beautiful women or finer swaggering gallants, and no one has placed them in more appropriate surroundings. He makes the figures real for us because all the backgrounds and accessories are taken directly from nature."

Before the book was passed for press the Paris Exhibition of 1889 was opened, and Mr. Pennell had an opportunity to see the drawings collected together there. Having done so, he added this footnote: "After a rather careful examination of the drawings and engravings in the Paris Exhibition of this year (1889) I cannot help being conscious of the fact that I have not given Abbey the place which he really deserves. Menzel is the founder of modern illustration; Fortuny, Rico, and Vierge have been its most powerful apostles, and among the cleverest men their influence will never grow less. But while Menzel's methods are obsolete, and Vierge's style can only be attempted by the most brilliant, anyone can see that a new school is arising, and this is the school of Abbey, who has at the present moment followers in every illustrating country in the world, men who are seeking to carry out his method of brilliant drawing carefully and seriously executed . . . American pen drawing, this exhibition conclusively proves, is the best, and American process reproduction is the most sympathetic, and American printing the most careful, and it is this harmonious co-operation which has enabled Abbey to become not only, as I have written, the greatest English-speaking illustrator, but the greatest living illustrator."

Elsewhere speaking of Menzel, whom Abbey also held in the highest reverence, Mr. Pennell wrote: "Personally I prefer the delicate refinement of Abbey in this sort of work to the brute strength of Menzel. Both men can draw details; but Abbey seems to love them; Menzel, though he never slights or draws them badly, apparently hates to be obliged to do them."*

It was after the publication both of Henry James's article and Mr. Pennell's book that the drawings for the first of the illustrated Comedies of Shakespeare appeared in the magazine—those for *The Merry Wives of Windsor*—where it is at once recognised by all good judges that Abbey's genius had advanced still further.

There have been countless illustrations of Shakespeare, but none have approached the debonair charm of those which were now beginning to enchant the readers of *Harper's*, and which would, one likes to fancy and believe, have given pleasure to the dramatist himself. Surely his gracious, courtly and whimsical world was never so translated into delicate life!

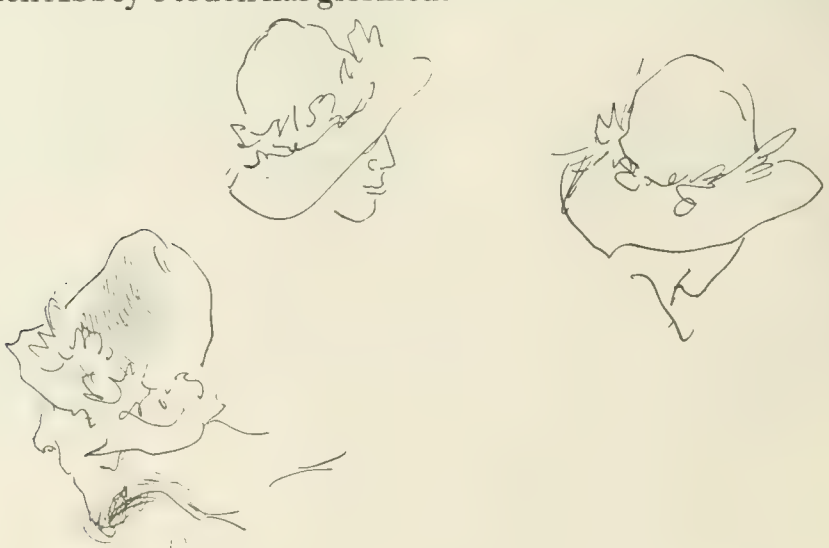
The series, it is interesting to note, was heralded by an article by William Winter in *Harper's Bazaar*. There was symmetry in the choice of the writer of the appreciation, since it was for the immediate purpose of illustrating an essay by Mr. Winter on Stratford-on-Avon that, as we know, Abbey had come to England in 1878: so that now, eleven years later, after a period in which he had made bewildering strides and had come to his own, and when he was about to publish realisations of the creations of Stratford-on-Avon's poet, an article from the same hand was curiously appropriate.

The essays which accompanied Abbey's drawings in the magazine were by Andrew Lang, who worked, however, for the most part quite independently, and expressed no views as to his collaborator's share beyond, in the notes to *The Merchant of Venice*, calling it "daring" and now and then remarking that the illustrator's idea of a character was not shared by him. Lang also rather deprecated efforts at

* When Mr. Pennell's book went into a second edition in 1894, Abbey's drawing for *She Stoops to Conquer* was relegated to the second place, and a new drawing by him, made for *The Deserted Village* ("Every pang that folly pays to pride,") which is included in the present work, had the position of honour, but the reproduction was disappointing.

historical precision, since Shakespeare himself was so careless—a sentiment that can have been little to Abbey's taste. His friend John Hay understood him better. "It is bad enough," he wrote, apropos of Abbey's labours in the interests of historical veracity, "to write history—but, after all, when your fact eludes you, you [the historian] can smear it over and nobody knows any better. But you [the artist] can't dodge the facts in your picture; you have got to be right or wrong; and to a fellow who has a prejudice for being right—as you have—it must be the divil's own job to tackle Shake. But you don't fail; and you are too mature to acquire the habit of failure now."

One more tribute. Let this chapter be brought to an end by a passage written by Abbey's old friend, Hopkinson Smith, himself an artist and "The Owl" of the Tile Club, summing up Abbey's gifts as an illustrator. It occurs in an article written for *Scribner's Magazine* a few years later, to which we shall return. "Abbey," wrote Hopkinson Smith, "in his art really has done what Wagner has done in music, Tennyson and the poets in verse. He has taken the old, retouched it, and made it new, giving us something infinitely better than the thing he found. An author's noblest work, his truest ideal, may indeed be always safely trusted in his hands. Dr. Holmes once said to an artist who illustrated one of his poems, 'I am so glad. I was afraid you would spoil it.' 'I am so glad' would have been the verdict of Goldsmith and of all the old English balladists whose men and women Abbey's touch has glorified."



CHAPTER XXIV

THE BOSTON LIBRARY COMMISSION

1890 Aged 38

Another Critical Year—The Boston Public Library—Charles Follen McKim—St. Gaudens—Abbey Becomes a Mural Painter—First Ideas for a Frieze—The Quest of the Holy Grail—A Twelve Years' Task

WE have seen how critical a period Abbey had been passing through in the last twelve months; and now other influences were converging upon him destined still more drastically to rearrange his life.

There was at that time in course of construction in Boston a new building for the Public Library. The architect-in-chief was Abbey's old friend, the late Charles Follen McKim, who, born in 1847, was then forty-two and a member of the famous firm of which Stanford White and William Rutherford Mead were the other partners. This structure, which is considered to be one of the most satisfying of modern American civic edifices, was to be beautiful and distinguished both within and without, and already St. Gaudens had been commissioned to design and execute for it various groups of statuary. To the plastic artists were now to be added E.A. Abbey and J.S. Sargent, and later Puvis de Chavannes.

Various stories have been told as to who it was that was gifted with sufficient insight to detect in the black-and-white drawings of Abbey the germ of great mural decoration, but to those competent to judge—to such architects as White and McKim (who were artists as well as architects) and to St. Gaudens—this required no remarkable perspicacity, for Abbey had long been recognised by them all as a master of design. St. Gaudens, at any rate, must have his share of the honour. It was while Miss Mead, not long before her marriage, was sitting to him for a portrait in bas relief, which was to be the sculptor's wedding present to Abbey, that the architects and trustees were in conclave on the subject, and naturally the trend of these consultations was mentioned. One day during one of the long talks

that enlivened the sittings St. Gaudens spoke of the desire of Mc Kim and White and of himself that Abbey should take a hand in the Boston decorations, but added they had very little hope, as Abbey had his living to make and the task must necessarily be very arduous and protracted, and also—a more serious matter—underpaid, since the money voted for the building had already been exceeded by a vast sum, and too little was left for "the carving and the gilding." That is to say, if Abbey undertook this work, which must cost him immense labour (and this the sequel proved to be the case), it would mean the giving up of the greater part of his income for a number of years—no small consideration when one remembers that he now had a new home to establish and maintain.

Miss Mead, however, replied that, in spite of that, she believed some such big task was the very thing that Abbey would like to undertake, and, in her opinion, should undertake, that he had recently said to her that since he had finished his "Corinna" he would like to experiment more largely; that he would really welcome the chance to see what he could do. On leaving the studio St. Gaudens reported this conversation to McKim and White, and the result was that the matter was discussed by all parties concerned and more or less settled—subject, of course, to the consent of the library trustees.

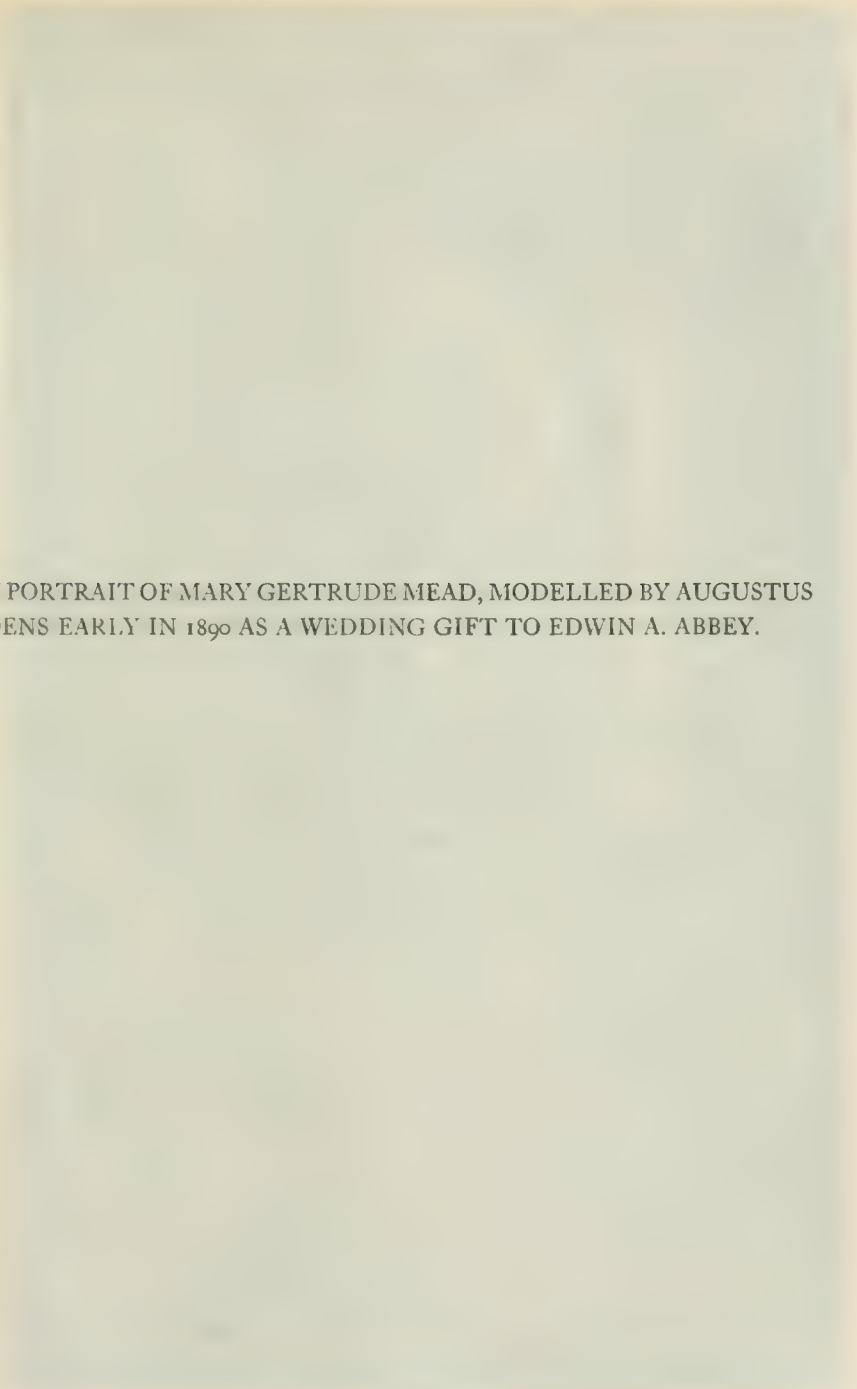
The following characteristic note to Abbey from St. Gaudens bears upon the great scheme:

"DARLING,

"McKim, White, Sargent, thee and I dine at the Players Wednesday night this week at 7.30, D.V., so help me G. But, be Jasus, McKim don't want any other fellow round, although I tried to [get] the whole crew together as we had agreed. The photos will be on hand. If you can't come, let me know right away. The Medallion* looks like hell. I thought I had done a good thing, but it makes me sick!

ST. G."

* This medallion portrait of Miss Mead underwent changes. Originally it was about three feet square, depicting a figure gathering blossoms from an apple tree, after one of Abbey's own designs and by way of compliment to him. But St. Gaudens was dissatisfied, and finally cut it down to its present size, showing only the head and shoulders.



MEDALLION PORTRAIT OF MARY GERTRUDE MEAD, MODELLED BY AUGUSTUS SAINT GAUDENS EARLY IN 1890 AS A WEDDING GIFT TO EDWIN A. ABBEY.

MARY GERTRUDE MEAD
MARCH XX
MDCCCLXXXX

The following letter from McKim makes further arrangements:

"MY DEAR ABBEY, "May 12th, 1890.

"Herter is at work on a model of the Shakespeare room, which will be sent to you to-morrow afternoon. I have not been able to get in to see you, but will try to do so to-morrow.

"Abbott writes from Boston expressing the pleasure of the trustees in anticipation of your visit, and says that they have got various nice people to meet you and Sargent and St. Gaudens. Altogether things look well for the great enterprise. Abbott is in hearty accord with the movement. I will show you his letter when I come. As the dinner has been ordered nothing must happen by any chance to our party. They are confidently expecting Sargent to come with us. It would undoubtedly be a black eye to the proceedings if any part of the New York contingent should fail in the face of their preparations.

"I am sorry that I could not get the model to you to-day, but it was impossible. As it is it will be a very rough affair, but perhaps sufficiently truthful in proportion to answer your purpose.

"I will not write St. Gaudens if you will send a messenger to him apprising him of what I have written.

"In haste, yours,

"C. F. McKIM."

One day in May, when the spring was at its very best, the expedition to Boston duly came off. The apple orchards with their huge trees were in bloom, and through miles and miles of these vast gardens the train passed on its way. That there might be a greater chance for talk and festivity, and in honour of Mrs. Abbey, who was invited too, McKim had hired a private car—which in America is a large affair, seating fifty to sixty passengers. Mr. Sargent was also of the party. Arrived in Boston, they trooped off to see a baseball match, and in the evening the men met at the fateful dinner with the trustees, the president of whom was Mr. Samuel A. B. Abbott.

Considering how vastly different had been Abbey's previous work; considering his age, when most men are no longer very susceptible

to new ideas and new media; and considering that he had produced only two oil paintings in his life—the "May-Day Morning" and the New Amsterdam hotel decoration—we must not withhold from the trustees a very warm admiration for their willingness to acquiesce in what it is impossible to describe in any other way than as an experiment. That Mr. Sargent, who had long been known as a great painter, should be invited was natural enough; but the choice of a beginner in paint, as Abbey was, was a stroke of inspired daring. All honour to them.

When Abbey came away from Boston, to sail for England, he carried with him a commission, more or less definite, to provide the Delivery Room of the Library with a frieze 180 feet long by 8 feet high, to consist of a series of appropriate designs—the theme to be his own choice—for which the sum of 15,000 dollars (or, roughly, three thousand English pounds) was to be paid.

Such a task had, of course, to be spread over a number of years, and, though it is to anticipate rather liberally, it may be well here to explain on what lines Abbey decided to work, reaching his final scheme only, of course, by gradual stages. Two letters, written by him on board the *Trave* in May, tell the story and outline his first thoughts. This is to his brother: "My big commission was only finally secured when I wired to you. I hadn't *decided* that we should go until then. We had taken our passage, but should have given it up if I had not heard definitely that afternoon. This commission is the decoration of the distributing room of the Boston Public Library—a room 40 by 60 feet and 21 feet high—or somewhere in that neighbourhood. There are to be no book-shelves on the walls, and I am to paint large panels with subjects taken either altogether from Shakespeare, or, one each, from some typical writer of the various countries of Europe. Sargent is to do another room—a special library—and I may do a special library also. La Farge is doing another. [Nothing was done by La Farge.] There isn't an awful lot of money in this—there never is in these things—but I hope what I receive will enable me to keep out of debt. This is quite strictly private at present. Sargent and I went over with McKim and St. Gaudens—who is

doing two large groups for the front of the building—and dined with the trustees and moneyed men of Boston and orated to them of our ideas, and were very finely received indeed. I want now to see the Vatican Library and the church at Perugia, Orcagna's frescoes at Orvieto, and some things at Florence before I begin, and I shall spend the summer getting together my ideas and finishing up what I can of Shakespeare's Comedies."

Abbey's other letter, written on board ship to McKim, outlines the artist's first idea of the theme. "As to subject, the great difficulty of generalising the literature of the civilised world is really staggering. What I proposed to Abbott was this—eight panels with subjects divided up something like this:

England—	something	from	either	Shakespeare, Chaucer
France—	,,	,,	,,	The Song of Roland, Rabelais, Molière, Froissart
Spain—	,,	,,	,,	Don Quixote, The Chronicle of the Cid
Germany—	,,	,,	,,	Some Rhine legend, Goethe
Scandinavia—	,,	,,	,,	A saga of some sort
Italy—	,,	,,	,,	Dante, Boccaccio
Greece—	,,	,,	,,	Homer
U.S.A.—	,,	,,	,,	Hawthorne

Of course this is *very* vague. I dare say *any* selection I made would come in for any amount of criticism. As to adhering to the original idea of doing a room altogether of Shakespearean subjects, I have a sneaking hope that I may still do the little room upstairs —the special library—as we had originally planned.

"I wonder how John [Sargent] is getting on, and whether you have built him a beautiful model yet. I went into his studio a day or two before I sailed and saw stacks of sketches of nude people—saints, I dare say, most of them, although from my cursory observations of them they seemed a bit earthy. You will surely get a great thing from him. He can do *anything*, and don't know himself what he can do. He is latent with all manner of possibilities, and the Boston people

need not be afraid that he will be eccentric or impressionistic, or anything that is not perfectly serious and non-experimental when it comes to work of this kind. I don't want a model myself; a careful and exact plan will do for me. If I want a model, I can get one knocked together over here." Abbey's first scheme was thought of only to be rejected. Continuing his search and pondering earnestly the legend of the Holy Grail, he realised its perfect adaptability. Moreover, the subject being common to all literatures and all countries, it had peculiar fitness as a symbol for a library where all learning was stored.

Abbey, as we know, never feared hard work, and, with Mrs. Abbey to help him in the amassing of authorities, he read every variant of the legend until, a master of all, he was so saturated with it as to be able to fuse the versions and create a new one of his own, capable of being divided dramatically into the requisite number of panels.

In the end the story was told in fifteen scenes, the period decided upon being the twelfth century. In the first scene—and in this summary use has been made of the catalogue of the exhibition of the second part of the series, in the Guildhall in 1901, which was a composite work of Henry James and Mrs. Abbey—in the first scene the child Galahad, the descendant, by his mother, of Joseph of Arimathea, is visited, among the nuns who bring him up, by a dove bearing a golden censer and an angel carrying the Grail, the presence of which operates as sustenance to the infant. From the hands of the holy women, in the legend, the predestined boy passes into those of the subtle Gurnemanz, who instructs him in the knowledge of the things of the world and the duties and functions of the ideal knight.

The next panel shows Galahad at the end of his vigil. Clothed in red, he is girt for going forth by Sir Launcelot, who fastens on one of his spurs, and Sir Bors, who attaches the other.

In the next panel we see the Arthurian Round Table and the curious fable of the Seat Perilous, the seat "perilous for good or ill," in which no man has yet sat with safety, not even the fashioner himself, but into which, standing vacant while it awaits only a blameless occupant, the young Sir Galahad, knighted by Arthur, has sworn a

KING ARTHUR'S ROUND TABLE.

GALAHAD IS LED BY JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA TO THE SEAT PERILOUS.

Twenty-four feet by eight feet.

A PANEL OF THE HOLY GRAIL FRIEZE IN THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

1891-1893.

FOLLOWED BY A CHARCOAL STUDY FOR THE PANEL.

1892.

THE KNIGHTS OF KING ARTHUR'S ROUND TABLE RECEIVING THE BISHOP'S BENEDICTION BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE ON THE QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL.

A PANEL OF THE HOLY GRAIL FRIEZE IN THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Twenty-two feet by eight feet.

1892-1894.

vow to be worthy to take his place. In the painting he comes to do so. The Companions of the Order are seated in Arthur's Hall, and every chair save one is filled. Suddenly the doors and windows close of themselves, the place becomes suffused with light, and Sir Galahad, robed in red, is led in by an old man clothed in white, Joseph of Arimathea, who, according to one of the most artless features of the romance, has subsisted for centuries by the possession of the supreme relic.

The knights are next seen about to go forth on their search for the Holy Grail, now formally instituted by King Arthur. They have heard Mass and are receiving the episcopal benediction, Sir Galahad at their head.

Amfortas, the Fisher King, King of the Grail, having been wounded several centuries before for taking up arms in the cause of unlawful love, lies under a spell, with all the inmates of the Castle of the Grail, where the fifth scene is laid. They are (the description of this panel is from the pen of Henry James) spiritually dead, and although the Grail often appears in their very midst, they cannot see it. From this strange perpetuation of ineffectual life they can none of them, women or men, priests or soldiers or courtiers, be liberated by death until the blameless knight shall at last arrive. It will not be sufficient, however, that he simply penetrates into the castle: to the operation of the remedy is attached that condition which recurs so often in primitive romance, the asking of a question on which everything depends. In the painting Sir Galahad has reached his goal, but at the very goal his single slight taint of imperfection, begotten of the too worldly teaching of Gurnemanz, defeats his beneficent action. Before him passes the procession of the Grail, moving between the great fires and the trance-smitten king, and gazing at it he tries to arrive, in his mind, at an interpretation of what it means. He sees the bearer of the Grail, the damsel with the Golden Dish (the prototype of whom was Herodias bearing the head of John the Baptist on a charger), the two knights with the Seven-branch Candlestick, and the knight holding aloft the Bleeding Spear. The duty resting upon him is to ask what these things denote, but, with the presump-

tion of one who supposes himself to have imbibed all knowledge, he forbears, considering that he is competent to guess. But he pays for his silence, inasmuch as it forfeits for him the glory of redeeming from this paralysis of centuries the old monarch and his hollow-eyed Court, forever dying and never dead, whom he leaves folded in their dreadful doom.

The next painting depicts the morning after Galahad's visit to the Castle of the Grail. Having ridden forth, he meets three damsels, the first, the Loathly Damsel, riding upon a pale mule with a golden bridle. This lady, once beautiful in form and features, is now, though noble still in form, hideous in feature, and in her arms is the head of a dead king encircled with a golden crown. The second lady is riding in the manner of an esquire; the third is on her feet, dressed as a stripling, and in her hand is a scourge with which she drives the two riders. These damsels are under the spell of the Grail Castle. A magic power is used, against her will, by the Loathly Damsel to tempt and destroy knights and kings. She, with her two companions, must continue to wander, doing deeds of wickedness, until the sinless Virgin Knight shall come to the Grail Castle and ask concerning the wonders he sees there. They now assail Sir Galahad with reproaches, cursing him for having failed on the previous day to ask the Question which not only would have delivered them and the inmates of the Castle but would have restored peace and plenty to the land. The earth must now remain barren and Sir Galahad wander forth again, followed by the curses of the peasantry, while war rages throughout the land. He must encounter many adventures, suffer many sorrows, and many years must pass before he returns once more to the Castle of the Grail, where, having through all ordeals remained sinless, he will finally ask the Question and redeem the sin-stricken land.

In the seventh panel Galahad is seen at the gate of the "Castle of the Maidens," fighting with the seven "Knights of Darkness" (the seven "Deadly Sins"), who have imprisoned a great company of maidens ("The Virtues") in order to keep them from all contact with man. Galahad's mission being to overcome Sin and redeem the

STUDY OF A JESTER, IN AN UNUSED PANEL OF THE HOLY GRAIL FRIEZE.

1892.

world by setting free the Virtues, he fights the seven Knights and overcomes them.

In the eighth panel Sir Galahad having passed the outer gate of the Castle, encounters a Monk, who blesses him and delivers up to him the keys of the Castle.

In the ninth his entry into the Castle is shown. The imprisoned maidens, who have long been expecting him, for it had been prophesied that the perfect knight would come to deliver them, welcome him with shy delight, putting out their hands to be kissed.

There ends the first of Galahad's missions. In the next panel we see him leaving Blanchefleur, his wife and earthly love, on their wedding morn: perforce, because a vision had shown him that only by a Virgin Knight could the Quest be achieved. Spiritually he and his wife—the "White Flower" of perfect womanhood—are one.

Having passed through many adventures, Sir Galahad returns in the eleventh panel to the Castle of the Grail. The procession of the Grail having once more passed before him, and, grown wise by knowledge and suffering, he has asked the Question and thereby healed Amfortas, cleansed him from his sin, and allowed the old King to die. In the painting we see the King dying in Galahad's arms and the Angel bearing away the Grail from the Castle.

Having now accomplished his great task, Galahad is guided by the spirit of the Grail towards the goal which shall crown his labours—the achievement of the Grail. He is directed towards the sea, to Solomon's ship, which shall bear him to Sarras, there to be crowned king, and there the Grail itself will finally appear to him. In the twelfth panel we see him, on a white charger, passing from the land, where peace and plenty once more reign, followed by the blessings of the people.

The thirteenth panel depicts Galahad in the ship. Sir Bors and Sir Percival accompany him, for, although, having sinned once, they can never see the Grail themselves, yet having persevered faithfully in the Quest, they have acquired the right to accompany Sir Galahad and witness his achievement. Resting upon a cushion in the stern of the ship are three spindles made from the "Tree of Life"—one snow-

white, one green, one blood-red. When Eve was driven from the Garden of Eden she carried with her the branch she had plucked from the "Tree of Life," and, having planted it, the branch grew to be a tree, with branches and leaves white, in token that Eve was a virgin when she planted it. When Cain was begotten the tree turned green, and afterwards, when Cain slew Abel, the tree turned red. The Grail, borne by an angel, guides the ship.

The fourteenth panel shows us the walls of the city of Sarras; the fifteenth, and last, the city itself, of which Sir Galahad is now king, upon a hill in which he has made a Sacred Place and built a Golden Tree. Morning and evening he repairs thither, and from day to day he beautifies the Tree, and, finally, now that it is complete, Joseph of Arimathea (with a company of Angels) appears with the Grail. As Sir Galahad gazes upon it, crown, sceptre, and earthly robe fall from him—he no longer needs them. He utters thanks to God for having let him see that which tongue may not describe, nor heart think. Having now beheld that which is the source of all life and knowledge and power, his spirit can no longer remain in the narrow confines of his body. The Grail itself is borne heavenward and is never again seen on this earth.

It would be interesting to know how many of the thousands of persons who have visited the Boston Library to see the finished pictures have given a thought to the labour which had to precede the actual painting. We think of an artist as one who dips his brush into the colour and continues to do so until the canvas is covered. That certainly underestimates the seriousness at any rate of the conscientious historical painter; and this book will have been mishandled if by the end of it a new conception of the arduousness of his toil is not established. But in the Holy Grail decorations Abbey had to be more than an historical painter: he had to be a poet, too.

There for the present we will leave them. From time to time we shall find references in the artist's letters to the progress of his work; but even when we do not, we ought to bear in mind that this task was in steady progress until 1902. During all that time Abbey can be visualised as making his studies, painting, painting out, repainting,

always conscious that the better is the enemy of the good; travelling for backgrounds; searching old shops for accessories; while in constant preparation, under his eye, were the necessary costumes for the model to wear.

CHAPTER XXV

ITALIAN TRAVEL AND AN ENGLISH HOME

1890–1891 Aged 38–39

First Academy Picture—Wanderings in England—Fairford and Lechlade—*The Deserted Village*—Morgan Hall—Charles Keene—Italian Travel—Domenico Morelli—Amalfi and Ravello—Raphael's " Jurisprudence "—An Artist's Ideal—Settlement at Morgan Hall—Mrs. Mead—J. S. Sargent—C. F. McKim—The Largest Studio in England

THE Abbeys reached London on June 4th, 1890, and in due course found their way to the Royal Academy, where the " May-Day Morning " (previously called " Corinna Going a-Maying") was proving itself a very popular picture. Not only did it attract the public, but one famous painter, at any rate, found it to his mind. "Millais," wrote Mr. J. P. Beadle to the artist, "was jawing nineteen to the dozen the other day to me in favour of your picture. It evidently took his eye more than anything else."

It had been Abbey's intention to go at once to Italy, but this plan was modified and the journey did not begin until the end of January, 1891, for on second thoughts he considered it wiser to finish as far as possible the English subjects he had on hand, and so leave his mind free while abroad for *The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and other plays set in Italy, and, above all, for undivided attention to the decorative works of the Old Masters. Deciding, therefore, to begin instantly upon the water-colour, "The Wandering Minstrel," commissioned by Montgomery Sears, Abbey and Mrs. Abbey started upon a search for a background. They went first to Sonning, on the Thames, to consider again the yard of the old inn there; but, this failing, they explored for several days, sometimes driving and sometimes walking, Berkshire and Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, until they came to a rest at the Bull Inn at Fairford, a suave grey Gloucestershire village, famous for the stained-glass windows in its beautiful church.

THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

"BESIDE THE BED WHERE PARTING LIFE WAS LAID."

Fourteen and a half inches by ten and a half inches.

1890.

"THE DESERTED VILLAGE."

GOLDSMITH.

E. A. Abbey
1890.

"BUT THE LONG POMP, THE MIDNIGHT MASQUERADE."

Eighteen inches by eleven and a half inches.

1890.

"THE DESERTED VILLAGE."

GOLDSMITH.

"THERE THE PALE ARTIST PLIES THE SICKLY TRADE."

Eleven inches by ten inches.

1891.

"THE DESERTED VILLAGE."

GOLDSMITH.

As it happened, Fairford was a momentous halting place, for on the following morning the landlord of the "Bull" mentioned an empty house which was well worth looking over, and led his guests to what was destined to be their home for twenty years and the scene of Abbey's principal labours—Morgan Hall, a serene, sunny house with walled gardens and old trees about it, and in front of the east windows a spacious meadow, eminently fitted (save for a few isolated trees) to be a cricket ground. Pleasant even then, although neglected and bare of creepers on the walls, its good fortune was to become one of the most hospitable of homes, acquiring, as the new tenants had time to impress themselves upon it, a blend of comfort and distinction of which they held the secret. But that was not yet.

After a couple of days at Fairford, the Abbeys (still homeless) went on to Lechlade, three miles away, where they took lodgings at Bridge House, and here Abbey found in the yard the background he had been in search of, and at once began an oil study, the water-colour to be painted in London.

Here, in Lechlade, and in all the country about, was also plenty of material for *The Deserted Village*, and as the oil study could be worked upon only towards sunset, the model, Colarossi, was sent for, and the following drawings were completed: "How often have I loitered o'er thy green," "When every rood of ground maintain'd its man," "His house was known to all the vagrant train," "Beside the bed where parting life was laid," "His looks adorned the venerable place," "A man severe he was and stern to view," "While words of learned length and thundering sound," "As some fair female, unadorned and plain," "Thou foundst me poor at first and keepst me so."

While at Bridge House, where their landlady was Mrs. Bowley, who years before had been Abbey's landlady at the Lechlade "Swan," they saw a good deal of the William Morrises, meeting them sometimes at Kelmscott, and sometimes, after rowing down the river, at Buscot Rectory at tea, in the lovely garden there, with the Rector and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Birchall, in whose hall Abbey had painted, in earlier days, the background for his water-colour

"The Widower." And one day Mr. and Mrs. Morris and Miss Morris took the Birchalls and the Abbeys on a delightful excursion up the lovely Coln valley to Chedworth to see the Roman Villa.

Another companion during the Lechlade sojourn was Alfred Parsons, who, while on a visit to the Abbeys, went over to see Morgan Hall, and gave it his benediction. Other houses were, as it happened, to be seen and considered before the final decision to take this one was made, but in the end it conquered.

Returning to London, Abbey settled down to work in his own studio at 56 Bedford Gardens, his principal tasks being "The Wandering Minstrel," the water-colour "Mariana in the Moated Grange," and on foggy days the drawings for *The Deserted Village*. He finished at that time "Around my fire an evening group to draw," "But the long pomp, the midnight Masquerade," and "No surly porter stands in guilty state," the beautiful iron gate in which was drawn from one of the entrance gates to Holland House. He also, owing to the darkness of this winter, began and, before going abroad, finished the nine drawings for *Much Ado About Nothing*—pen and ink being unaffected by privation of natural light. Furthermore, he drew at this time the figure of Ferdinand from *The Tempest*, "Where should this Music be?" (the drawing which he showed to Morelli in Naples), but the background was done later in Amalfi.

Meanwhile in a little room on the floor below the studio under the glass-house, Mrs. Abbey superintended the making of costumes, some for the men and women in *Much Ado*, and several for the figures in the Holy Grail frieze, tentative sketches for which were already in being, and these costumes were the nucleus of what in time became an immense collection, the greater part made at home by sewing women under Mrs. Abbey's guidance.

For recreation at this time there were the various collections in the South Kensington Museum, among which they spent most of their spare late afternoons and evening hours, often to be joined later, in the grill room, by Henry James, who was then living close by, in De Vere Gardens, and was a frequent companion. There was also the excitement of negotiating for Morgan Hall, of which we hear some-

DON PEDRO, BENEDICK, CLAUDIO, LEONATO.

BALTHAZAR : " SIGH NO MORE LADIES, SIGH NO MORE,
MEN WERE DECEIVERS EVER."

Twenty-one and a half inches by fourteen inches.

1895.

" MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING," ACT II, SCENE III.

DOGBERRY AND HIS COMPARTNER WITH THE WATCH.

DOGBERRY : " ARE YOU GOOD MEN AND TRUE ? "

Twenty-one and a half inches by fourteen and a half inches

"MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING," ACT III, SCENE III.

1890.

A drawing made for the "Comedies," but not hitherto published

thing definite in a letter in January, 1891, from Abbey to Hopkinson Smith, written from an "absolutely permanent address, the Reform Club." In this letter the new home is described. "A good-sized old-fashioned house—with a park and fine old trees (twenty acres) and two large gardens. Morgan Hall, Fairford, Gloucestershire, is what you will see painted on the sign, and the oftener you come, and the longer you stay when you do come, the better. This is a quiet, peaceful place when you get into business with lawyers. Three months we have been rowing over a lease. To be sure, one of the trustees was thrown by a horse and killed, and the agent shot himself during the negotiations, but these were comparatively slight hitches and now everything seems all right.... I didn't intend writing such an amusing letter when I started it; never mind, I won't do it soon again."

This letter, begun on January 4th, 1891, goes on to say that "Old Charles Keene is very ill—not expected to live. He is a great man, all unappreciated." Adding to it on January 8th Abbey says: "I saw the news of dear old Charles's death just after I had written the above." Keene died on January 4th, aged sixty-seven.

Early in 1891 "The Wandering Minstrel" was finished and despatched to its destination in Boston, and "Mariana in the Moated Grange" was also finished and sent off to New York for the Spring Exhibition of the American Water-Colour Society, but unfortunately it arrived too late. Abbey refers to his disappointment, in a second letter to Hopkinson Smith, and adds: "I'll write to a few millionaires (if there are any left) to run down to Franklin his three-cornered square, and take a look at it (by the way, what a terrible thing for a scientific man like Franklin to have a three-cornered square named for him!). Then after these millionaires have gazed their wicked fill on to the water-colour I'll have it sent back here—in order that my long-neglected 'Institute' may have a chance at it." But Mr. Henry Marquand, the collector, intervened and bought the picture, which remained in America, and is there still.

Finally, towards the end of January, 1891, having started his builders on the necessary work in the house at Fairford and on the building of the big studio, the exact measurements of which were 64 feet

by 40 feet by 25 feet, Abbey and Mrs. Abbey began their journey to Italy, stopping a couple of days at Basle to see the collection of Holbein drawings and the Industrial Museum, and a few days in Genoa for the pictures and palaces. Here Abbey made studies of gardens, of fountains, staircases, little known and weather-beaten statues, and so forth, for future use in the Shakespeare drawings, in many a background of which these bits reappear. Then on to Florence and Rome, but it was not until the return journey that they had more than a glimpse of these two great places, so anxious were they to get to the South to meet the spring, thinking to follow it northward later on. In Florence, however, time was made for a first sight of the galleries and of Benozzo Gozzoli's wall paintings in the chapel of the Riccardi Palace.

In Rome Abbey saw his old friend Elihu Vedder, known to the English public chiefly by his illustrated edition of FitzGerald's *Omar Khayyam*. Vedder was then at 68 Capo le Casa, "as," he says in a note to Abbey, "any hack driver knows. I should be very sorry not to see you," and he adds, in a note of welcome, "I missed seeing Bill Laffan last winter, and others, and think it hard that I can never see any of the dear old set, and want to see what you're like when married."

Passing on to Naples, Abbey presented Alma Tadema's letter of introduction to Domenico Morelli, who, having carried out much mural painting in Italian churches, not only showed a lively and sympathetic interest in the projected work of the younger painter, but told him as far as possible of his own methods and processes. Morelli, who himself had done beautiful work in black-and-white, greatly admired the pen-and-ink drawing of Ferdinand, which Abbey showed him, and although he was getting to be an old man, and his wife was ill, he arranged a number of meetings during their short stay in Naples, and afterwards, until he died a few years later, always kept in touch with his young fellow artist.

Writing to Alma Tadema from Naples, on February 15th, 1891, Abbey says: "We have this moment come from a charming visit to Morelli. He showed us, of course, many delightful and extraordinary

FERDINAND AND ARIEL.

FERDINAND : "WHERE SHOULD THIS MUSIC BE ? I' TH' AIR OR TH' EARTH ?"

Seventeen and three-quarter inches by eleven and a half inches.

1890-1891.

"THE TEMPEST," ACT I SCENE II.

things—among them a beautiful water-colour, of which I dare say you may have seen a study, for the subject is evidently one he has had in his mind for some time: three angels alighted in a flowery place somewhere under a clear delicate yellow sky. . . .

"We are in rude health, and it seems so long since we left London that I am gladly ceasing to remember how we toil there, like gnomes in the earth, and am only living in a present state of bright weather. It has been cloudy, to be sure, and last night there was a fall of nice, clean, white snow, and the wind roars about this height upon which we are perched, and from our window [in the Hotel Bristol] we see the whole expanse of the bay ruffled with white-capped waves. Still we know there must be warm weather here sometimes, or the people would not be so well prepared to enjoy it. The occupation of hair-combing in streets and public places (an occupation which seems to take the place here of fox-hunting and partridge-shooting in ruder and more northern climes) is carried on with more or less discomfort in a high wind. The flea-catchers wander about the streets, their occupation gone for the present; but we are confidently assured that happier days are in store for us all, and that over the hills at Amalfi and Ravello the sun shines brightly all day long, and one may bask in the sun there undisturbed by wind and dust—which we shall do after next Wednesday. I think we have enjoyed Genoa as much as Naples, and I hope we can go back there. We scampered through Rome. The Carnival was in possession, and we merely drove and wandered about.

"We are oppressed by the grandeur of our apartment, which is gorgeous in the extreme. To be sure we have no place to put our things away, nor to hang things up, and our washing arrangements are of a sketchy character; but the furniture of our sitting room is gilt and scrolly, and we have several large mirrors and many lustered arrangements for holding candles (at a franc per candle), and then there is the view, which is the most expensive thing one can have in these Italian hotels. . . . As we sit at *table d'hôte* behind our half-gallon demijohn of Chianti, our thoughts turn sadly back to the happy friends we have left behind—in a land where the churches and

galleries are properly warmed and where no pretence is made about a sun which is warranted to shine—and don't."

From Tadema's reply I take some sentences: "I suppose you do not travel with your books? It would be so nice if you could give one to Morelli. He appreciates that sort of thing so much, and I know he will appreciate your art as much as anyone. You know his drawings in pen and ink? He has done such beauties. We have two of them. Has not he a fine head? He must be getting old.

"Don't forget to go to La Cava and Paestum. Those ruined temples are full of suggestions for backgrounds. . . . The drive back through Salerno and Vietri is beautiful—you will enjoy it. Please, when you do, think of us. Those carriages with three horses and a fellow hanging on behind are quite fine. When you pass a cornfield beginning to get green, point it out to the *veturino* and say 'Macaroni.' They like that sort of thing."

In Naples much time was spent in its wonderful Museum, and, as always in Abbey's journeys, all the curiosity shops were minutely explored. A day was spent at Pompeii, and Capodimonte and a few other gardens were visited for the views and always with the hope of good Shakespearian settings, but Abbey's happiness was suddenly dashed by the news of the death of Mrs. Henry Curtiss, the "Cousin Jo" with whom so many of his early New York memories were associated and whom he had always very deeply loved.

Having no further spirit for Naples, he left and went on by train to Vietri, from thence driving the several miles along the coast to Amalfi. Here he made studies of caves, of rock formations, of huge cactuses and fig trees, many of which can be seen in the drawings for *The Tempest;* studies of blossoming trees—almond and peach, oleander and orange and olive; and several studies of lemon groves, one of which he used in *A Winter's Tale* for the pen-drawing of "Perdita and Florizel," while others served useful purposes for many years to come.

The Abbeys stayed at the Hotel Capuccini, which was once a monastery, in the middle of architecture and gardens and scenery almost embarrassingly rich: "Material enough," Abbey tells Mr. Spielmann, "to last me for years." In a letter to Hopkinson Smith a

THE BANQUET.

SOLEMN AND STRANGE MUSIC, WITH PROSPERO AT THE TOP, INVISIBLE. ENTER SEVERAL STRANGE SHAPES, BRINGING IN A BANQUET.

Twenty-one and a half inches by fourteen and a half inches.

1891.

"THE TEMPEST," ACT III, SCENE III.

ALONZO AND GONZALO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, ADRIAN AND FRANCISCO.

PROSPERO (in his magic robes): "THERE STAND,
FOR YOU ARE SPELL-STOPP'D."

Twenty-one inches by fourteen and a half inches.

1891.

"THE TEMPEST," ACT V. SCENE I.

fuller description is found: "Peach blossoms relieved against pale evening skies and white-washed walls engage my attention—at present. A lovelier place than this is—*ain't*. On the hills above, Ravello, a perfectly beautiful, old, out-of-the-way place, is a mine whence I expect to dig enough to last me through a couple of years of work.... I am sitting in the organ loft of an old chapel (the landlord is saying his prayers in front of me) in which is a lovely old bird's-egg blue organ, of which I have been doing a careful study, with a view to ultimate white nuns singing Vespers, candles on the altar below, seen through the lattice in the front. How's that? I wonder if you have been here? It is an old monastery on the side of a cliff over the sea. We sleep in cells and eat in an old refectory, with a crucifix in the ceiling. . . . The landlord is not (as suggested above) eternally thinking out plans for screwing another franc out of you, and Cookies don't penetrate this far into the country."

At Ravello, where the Abbeys remained for several weeks, their rooms opened upon a pergola, of which Abbey made a study to be afterwards used for his picture "O Mistress Mine, where are you roaming?" now in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool. He also made many studies of patterns of Byzantine mosaics in a little used Byzantine Church in the square and studies of vine-covered pergolas, the whole hillside forming a series of gardens, flights of stone steps leading from one down to another. And here for regular companions every evening were such interesting fellow guests as the late Sir Charles Newton, Keeper of the Greek and Roman Antiquities in the British Museum and the discoverer of the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus; the late Strahan Davidson, Master of Balliol, busy at that time upon his book on Cicero; his brother, Mr. Edward Strahan, and Mrs. Strahan. The Hotel Palumbo was small—only large enough to hold the above number of guests. Tourists came from Amalfi and elsewhere for lunch every day, but every evening the dinner was like a private party, and after dinner Mrs. Strahan played delightfully Beethoven and other music on the very piano which Wagner had used while occupying these rooms years before when he had there composed *Tannhäuser*.

Abbey returned to England by way of Rome, Siena and Florence, with all too short a stay in each place. In Rome much time was spent in the Vatican, and after delay and difficulty he succeeded in seeing the Pinturicchio wall paintings in the Appartamenta Borgia, which, at that time, was not open to the public. To see these was one of the principal objects of his visit to Rome. Beautiful and decorative as he thought them–and his admiration for them only increased with time –there was another painting in the Vatican, "The Jurisprudence" of Raphael, which was to him then, and remained ever after, the most perfect, the most noble and beautiful, the most satisfying of any decorative painting he had ever seen or was to see; a composition which, in his opinion, fulfilled every requirement of such a work and could, therefore, never be surpassed. He saw this again in 1898, and later on said that he must have a photograph of it hanging where he could see it every day.

In the number of *Scribner's Magazine* for May, 1917, the late Kenyon Cox, in his article on "The Golden Age of Painting," writes as follows of "The Jurisprudence" and of the painting next it in the Vatican, "The School of Athens," and his words are so nearly the words that Abbey used in speaking of "The Jurisprudence" that they may be quoted here. "They are unapproachable examples of what composition may accomplish, noble and gracious in their ordering, perfect in their balance, endlessly lovely in their interweaving of line, fitting their spaces with sovereign mastery and ease."

Returning to London the Abbeys settled at once—on April 18th —in their new home in Gloucestershire, and four days later their first visitor arrived—Mrs. Mead, Mrs. Abbey's mother, who, in the care of her son, the late Frederick Mead, came from New York for a six months' stay, and to their great satisfaction remained for three years and a quarter, when her son came again to take her home. Old lady that she was—then in her sixty-ninth year—Mrs. Mead was endowed with the gift of eternal youth. Distinguished and beautiful in appearance, and gay, humorous, and kind in manner, she made a place for herself not only at Morgan Hall, but in the hearts of all those with whom she came in contact. Devoted to her new and only

THE KING, HELENA, BERTRAM, LAFEU, PAROLLES, AND SEVERAL LORDS.

KING: "WHY, THEN, YOUNG BERTRAM, TAKE HER; SHE'S THY WIFE."
BERTRAM: "MY WIFE, MY LIEGE? I SHALL BESEECH YOUR HIGHNESS
IN SUCH A BUSINESS, GIVE ME LEAVE TO USE
THE HELP OF MINE OWN EYES."
KING: "KNOW'ST THOU NOT, BERTRAM,
WHAT SHE HAS DONE FOR ME?"

Eighteen and three-quarter inches by fourteen and a half inches.

1891.

"ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL," ACT II, SCENE III.

THE DUKE AND VALENTINE.

THE DUKE : "BE GONE, I WILL NOT HEAR THY VAIN EXCUSE."

Seventeen and a half inches by seventeen inches.

1891.

"TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA," ACT III, SCENE I.

UNDER SILVIA'S WINDOW.

PROTEUS, THURIO, AND MUSICIANS, HOST AND JULIA DRESSED AS A BOY.

THURIO: "WHO IS SILVIA? WHAT IS SHE
THAT ALL OUR SWAINS COMMEND HER?"

Twenty-two inches by seventeen and a quarter inches.

1891.

"TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA," ACT IV, SCENE II.

"AND EVERY PANG THAT FOLLY PAYS TO PRIDE."

Thirteen and a half inches by twelve and a half inches.

1891.

"THE DESERTED VILLAGE."

GOLDSMITH.

This picture shows a corner of the drawing room of Morgan Hall.

son-in-law, she became devoted also to Mr. Sargent and he to her. He was shortly to settle at Morgan Hall, where he was to paint his Boston work in the great studio, and during the next few years these four people made a happy and contented household, the days filled with the hardest of hard work and the evenings rendered delightful by music, contributed chiefly by Mr. Sargent.

The studio was not at first ready for occupation, but this did not prevent Abbey from setting to work on the Shakespeare. *Love's Labour's Lost*, which largely required out-of-door backgrounds, and *The Tempest* were the first plays to be done. Both were completed in 1891. The first drawing made at Morgan Hall was "Miranda in the doorway of her cell, with Ferdinand kneeling" (Act III., Scene 1). Mrs. Abbey posed for Miranda, as she did for all the female figures in seven of the eight plays that were done at Fairford (except for the Countess of Rousillon, when Mrs. Mead posed with her daughter), none of the female models whom Abbey wanted being at that time available.

As soon as the studio was sufficiently advanced a man came down —an Italian—who had posed for the men in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and in the autumn came Colarossi to pose for Mr. Sargent, and old Demarco, who had a very beautiful head, was there for Abbey, but later when Mr. Sargent needed a younger model Abbey took on Colarossi; and in due course, to sit for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the thirty or forty angels in the "Arthur's Round Table," came Miss Nellie Brown, and there soon ceased to be any difficulty in persuading models, male or female, to come so far.

All's Well that Ends Well and *Twelfth Night* were begun and finished in 1891. *A Winter's Tale* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* were also begun, and some of the drawings finished in 1891, and Abbey began this year a large mediæval water-colour, "The Priest and the Great Lady," which bade fair to be the most important water-colour he had done. As soon as the studio was ready for work he set up three canvases for the Holy Grail frieze, and after making many studies in charcoal and oil began to lay in the designs. The canvas was very heavy, well primed and painted on the back with red lead. He used oil colours and painted them in with wax and turpentine.

Abbey was commissioned also in this year to make a colour design for the Children's Window in St. Peter's Church, Morristown, New Jersey.

Save for a fortnight's visit to Paris to see the Salon and Paris museums, and a couple of days at Amiens, he remained very steadily at Morgan Hall for the next year. Mr. Sargent paid several short visits, once with McKim; and early in November he remained to take up his work in the studio, and became a regular inmate of Morgan Hall, his practice being to go to London each season for portraits, and then abroad and return in the autumn.

A note from McKim to Mrs. Abbey in the summer of 1891 shows that cricket had already begun, and, although yet only in a small way, sufficiently to make at any rate one convert. "The world [McKim began, after his first experience of Gloucestershire's beautiful villages] would be (to my mind) a good deal poorer if English trees and parish churches had been left out! . . . As for the cricket, my shoulders and shins still remind me that I was born in the reign of Louis Philippe, and *not* twenty-five years ago. It must have been a pathetic sight to the Heavenly Host above, when all at once, on the very way to the steamer in Liverpool, I was seen to stop at a certain shop window and immediately after to plunge in and then radiantly out with a cricket bat—a 'guaranteed driver'—victim to the same old delusion in regard to a new future, free from cigars and wine and late hours! However, according to the old adage, I have still one year of grace, for it goes 'A man to forty-five may make new habits; after that—he has hard work to steer his old ones.'"

To Abbey's interest in cricket we come later. Enough to say here that he played whenever he had the chance and saw a good match as often as possible.

Among other visitors to Morgan Hall during the first year was Alfred Parsons, of course, who came every year except when away from England, his brother and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Parsons; Antoinette Sterling and her husband, John MacKinlay; Mr. and Mrs. J. Henry Harper, and John Pettie, R.A. Among neighbouring callers should be mentioned the William Morrises.

THE DUKE AND MUSICIANS.

DUKE : "IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE, PLAY ON."

Sixteen and a half inches by eleven inches.

1891.

"TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL," ACT I, SCENE I.

OLIVIA, THE CLOWN AND MALVOLIO.

MALVOLIO : " I MARVEL YOUR LADYSHIP TAKES DELIGHT IN SUCH A BARREN RASCAL."

Twenty-one and a half inches by seventeen inches.

1891.

" TWELFTH NIGHT," ACT I, SCENE V.

MARIA, CLOWN, SIR TOBY BELCH AND SIR ANDREW AGUE-CHEEK.

Twenty-one and a half inches by seventeen inches

1891.

"TWELFTH NIGHT," ACT II, SCENE III.

THE DUKE, VIOLA AND CLOWN.

CLOWN SINGS :

Come away, come away, Death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid ;
Fly away, fly away, breath ;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white stuck all with yew,
O prepare it !
My part of death no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet
On my black coffin let there be strown ;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown :
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there.

Twenty-two inches by seventeen and a quarter inches.

1891.

"TWELFTH NIGHT," ACT II, SCENE IV.

THE GREAT STUDIO

Although not written until some years later, a first-hand description of the great Morgan Hall studio—the largest in England for a painter, at that time and perhaps still—from the pen of Mr. M. H. Spielmann, may be inserted here, when the Boston work of the two friends is in the full tide of progress. The article appeared in the *Magazine of Art*. "It is [said Mr. Spielmann] a workshop, not a showplace, but none the less picturesque for that—a place where great thoughts may be carried out on a fitting scale, and where many a lofty conception is in the course of concretion. Enormous easels, a dozen or more, laden with vast canvases in every stage of completion occupy but a fraction of the space; tapestries hang from heavy frames, not for decoration but for use, and carved oak doors and panels rest against the walls; studies and casts of curious architectural features and sculptures; arms and armour, lay figures and figurines; stacks of canvases, unused, half-used, and used, for sketches from Nature, or ideal compositions, or pictures 'on the way'; chests of drawers full of specimens of superbly designed materials velvets, brocades, and silks of various periods and special manufacture—with new fabrics of particular colour or design, mere bits, many of them, but sufficient to reveal the texture, or their secrets of light and shade; old chairs, musical instruments and 'properties' of various kinds—all things, in this vast apartment, as accessories for the designer's craft and nothing more.

"On stands and in drawers, sketch-books and albums of studies are classified as to subject, arranged in groups according to the pictures for which they were produced. Trestlefuls of elaborate studies and half-finished drawings stand around; photographs are pinned about of pictures of the period with which the artist may for the moment be dealing—with a view to maintaining in his own mind the spirit rather than the art-standard of the time; a library crowded with the finest folios and books of art and archæological reference stands ready, with a writing table close by, littered in orderly confusion, to remind the painter of the daily communication of the outside world. There is a built-up scene of the next great picture, devised for better realisation of proposed composition, with all the

crowd of figures and dressed-up figurines: for thus the painter experiments with arrangements and with effects of light and shade. Not too much importance is attached to such artifices; for not long since a great model of a colonnade of extraordinary elaboration was constructed, with a view to determine the question of shadows thrown by the pillars when a light was introduced, and forthwith discarded on its failure to reveal with truth the sought for effects. But thoroughness and laborious conscientiousness are main qualities of Mr. Abbey's temperament: he seems to aim at that sort of truth of effect—the only sort—that can convince the spectator; and he neglects no means, whatever the cost in effort or expense, to secure the end which is his only aim. . . .

"Regarded from this point of view the remaining feature of the studio takes peculiar significance. I refer to the amazing wardrobe —an interior building constructed at one end of the studio. Here, hung in due order, classified with such care, love, and pride as an entomologist might display in the arrangement of his specimens, is the vast collection of garments of all periods and styles which Mr. Abbey has collected or had devised, and to which additions are continuously being made. Here they hang, on right hand and on left, in diminishing perspective, until one might almost imagine one's self in the 'property shop' of some great theatre. Costumes original and special (men's and women's), hats and cloaks, boots and shoes and accessories—all but the furs and arms, which for greater care are stored elsewhere. Yet they are not by any means regarded by the painter in the light of theatrical 'properties' . . . they serve, as they ought, to give assistance as to cut, fall, character, light and shade, and composition of line—that is to say, as suggestions for invention and not model for imitation. In short, Mr. Abbey, as the practical architect of his pictures, does not despise anxious consideration and preparation of the scaffolding."

Such was the room, then, in which, in 1891, in the heart of Gloucestershire, two American artists embarked upon their task of beautifying and ennobling a New England city.

After Abbey's death, before the lease expired, Mrs. Abbey had

THE KING OF NAVARRE, THE PRINCESS OF FRANCE, AND THEIR ATTENDANTS.

KING: "FAIR PRINCESS, WELCOME TO THE COURT OF NAVARRE."

Twenty and a half inches by fourteen and a half inches.

1891.

"LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST." ACT II, SCENE I.

ARMADO AND MOTH.

ARMADO: "WHAT WILT THOU PROVE?"
MOTH: "A MAN, IF I LIVE; AND THIS BY, IN AND WITHOUT, UPON THE INSTANT."

Seventeen inches by twelve inches.

1891

"LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST," ACT III, SCENE I.

DULL, SIR NATHANIEL, HOLOFERNES.

Eighteen inches by seventeen inches.

1891.

"LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST," ACT IV, SCENE II.

the studios taken down, and the spot where they had stood reverted again to the kitchen garden.

In 1890–1891 *Harper's* printed six of the Comedies, selections from which are given here. The plays were *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Measure for Measure*, and *The Tempest*.

CHAPTER XXVI

WORK AND TRAVEL

1892–1893 Aged 39–41

Advice to Art Students—Progress With the Boston Frieze and Shakespeare—American Historical Projects—Alma Tadema—St. Gaudens—The Bayreuth Festival—The Lure of Rothenburg—A Stained-glass Window—John Pettie—A Feat of Painting—Venice—Carpaccio—A Boccaccio Room—Gondoliers at Chicago—*Midsummer Night's Dream* and end of the Comedies—Henry James

IF the letters that have come to light are few in this year and for several years after it is largely because Abbey's hand was now continuously busy upon the Shakespeare Comedies and his thoughts occupied chiefly with the Boston paintings, and Mrs. Abbey, to spare him, had taken on the burden of the general correspondence. But that he, himself, wrote to his friends is evident from the many replies, acknowledging his own, notably from Henry James, Alfred Parsons, and J. S. Sargent, none of whom preserved Abbey's letters.

Early in 1892 the following epistle of excellent counsel was addressed by Abbey to a young compatriot with artistic ambitions who had been commended to him, and who after a visit to Fairford had passed on to Paris. "The great trouble," he wrote, "with the vast majority of our artists at home is that they cease to be students too soon. They spend a couple of years—even three or four years—in Paris, or some other place where students congregate, and, bored by the drudgery of the serious *atelier* and seeing certain easy-going pictures attracting a certain amount of attention and having also a certain amount of merit, they throw over the opportunity (which, mind you, *never comes again*) to make themselves as perfect as they may be with the aid of all the facilities a far-seeing body of eminent artists have, during many years, accumulated for their benefit, and dash into paint with a confidence bred entirely of ignorance and intolerance of the training that they, at that ill-informed and blind period of their lives, do not see the need of.

"Go to the Louvre constantly (on Sunday mornings you will have the place to yourself, or nearly so). Look at the designs and drawings

PETRUCHIO AND KATHARINA.

PETRUCHIO : "BUT FOR MY BONNY KATE, SHE MUST WITH ME."

Twenty-one inches by fifteen inches.

1892.

"THE TAMING OF THE SHREW," ACT III, SCENE II.

PETRUCHIO TO LUCENTIO.

PETRUCHIO : "'TWAS I WON THE WAGER."

Twenty inches by twelve inches.

1892.

"THE TAMING OF THE SHREW," ACT V, SCENE II.

by the great masters and reflect that they thought it necessary to take all that pains before they began their painting, and that they did not rely upon genius or talent to carry them through. Remember that you are pretty blind at present. I don't remember ever before having seen an art student of your age absolutely without a sketch-book. You should be sketching *always*, *always*. Draw anything. Draw the dishes on the table while you are waiting for your breakfast. Draw the people in the station while you are waiting for your train. Look at *everything*. It is all part of your world. You are going to be one of a profession to which everything on this earth means something. Keep every faculty you have been blessed with wide awake. The older you get the more full your life will be getting."

The sketch-books which Abbey himself filled, all of which are preserved, and with which I have spent delightful hours, are proof that he practised what he preached. But probably of no artist of any time can it more truly be said that he was always learning—always preparing to be ready to begin.

The tendency of so many young artists to dispense with drudgery was much on Abbey's mind, and there are other references to it in his letters. Among various unfinished fragments of correspondence are the following remarks to the late Charles Eliot Norton. "In the first place I am convinced that it should be impressed upon this amiable legion, that is to say, the unprepared and usually insufficiently endowed students sent by the charitably disposed to study art abroad, that for a long time the æsthetic part of art instruction should be held in abeyance, that the science of the profession, or calling, should be acquired as patiently and as thoroughly as possible. When I say as possible, I do not mean to place any limit of time or means. This science is taught in many continental schools and at the Royal Academy; perhaps in its highest form, aside from these æsthetic questions, at the 'Ecole des Beaux Arts'–and after the hand has learned to obey the eye, *then* the æsthetic part of the education should begin—*years* of it, not months. . . . The majority return to their native land full of the latest fad in pictures; and I speak now of America—in the absence, as a rule, of the inspiration derived from

the environment of great works of art, they feed for the balance of their days upon a fashion which may have become obsolete on this side of the ocean almost before they have set up their American studios."

A letter to Charles Parsons early in 1892 developed the same argument. "Sometimes," Abbey writes from Fairford, "sitting out alone in the quiet greenery I have desperate designs for reforming all sorts of artistic affairs at home [that is, in America], which I dare say get reformed all the same in time without my help or my indignation. I think of the dozens and dozens of innocent youths who sit in the schools there—all sure that if they could get to Paris for a year all would be well. And some of them *do* get to Paris—often with the assistance of some mistaken philanthropist—and go to swell the horde of blind kittens who nose and fumble and grope at that very milkless breast—dying their artistic death a little sooner than they would at home may be, but dying just the same. A few determined ones survive, but it is not always the determined soul that is the most sensitive. The Schools of the Beaux Arts are well worth while, and it is my daily loss that I have not gone through the experience they would have afforded me—and the thoughtful Frenchman who is cared for there, and afterwards at that wonderful Villa Medici in Rome, has himself to blame if his country is not the better for her care of him. But with our boys it is very different. They seldom get admitted to the Beaux Arts nowadays, and are forced to fall back upon claptrap schools—where they breathe foul air and fouler ideas and opinions—their one ambition being to get a picture into the Salon and to get a medal afterwards. I feel sure that the days of heterogeneous exhibitions of pictures are numbered. 'Art' no longer means solely the production of a square of canvas—or a group in stone—and perhaps in the whirl of 'Reform' which is raising the roof of the little box on the corner of 23rd Street [Abbey refers to the National Academy] it may occur to some member of that institution . . . which I believe has something to say as to the desirability of electing as its members those proficient in the 'Arts of Design.' I don't remember to have ever seen there, for instance, an architectural draw-

MORGAN HALL, FAIRFORD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

1. THE EAST FRONT.

2. THE WEST FRONT.

Merton Hall Fairford Gloucester East Front

Merton Hall Fairford Gloucester West Front

ing or a group of sculpture or a decorative notion of any serious sort. I dare say it will all come some of these days."—It was not a little in the hope of being practically of service that early in 1895 Abbey threw himself with such vigour into the establishment of the American Academy in Rome.

In the spring of 1892 Abbey lost a dear friend by the death of James Osgood. Writing to Charles Parsons in June he says: "Poor dear old Jimmy's death was a great blow to me. I am glad I lived to know him intimately. A gentle generous soul with the heart of a child, whose chiefest pleasure was in seeing his friends happy about him. We had a simple funeral without ostentation or parade—and if his spirit was anywhere about, it must have seen that friendship is not an empty word.

"I wish," the letter continues, "you could have come to see us here at Fairford. To Gertrude and me it is a complete little place. The house is large and roomy, and is surrounded by a little park of twenty odd acres with large trees in groups, and a wooded walk all the way round it. Just now the whole place is heavy with the scent of syringa blossoms, and by and by we are hoping that our carefully tended and heavily planted flower garden will make the place gay. We made four long beds 6 feet wide and nearly 80 feet long in a lawn that we didn't use at the side of the house. . . . Across the stable yard (all round the wall of it are trained old-fashioned roses, just now making a grand show,) is the studio, which I hear is the largest one there is. It doesn't look very large with our big canvases in it, and sometimes one is rather at a loss where to put anything. My Boston work is getting on rapidly now, and I hope very shortly to have one wall finished. My frieze is 8 feet high and 192 feet long. The side walls are 63 ft., divided into compartments representing scenes in the life of Galahad (or Parsifal) and the Quest of the Holy Grail. . . .

"My idea is to treat the frieze not precisely in what is known as decorative fashion but to represent a series of paintings, in which the action takes place in a sort of procession (for lack of a better word) in the foreground. The background is there all the same but I try to keep it without incidental interest. Galahad's figure, in scar-

let, is the brilliant recurring note, all the way round the room. The foreground figures are 6 feet high, but will look less. I have been surprised to find how easy it is to work on so large a scale. After one gets accustomed to the difference of focus, it is quite as simple as working on a small scale. Of course, I have made drawings and studies innumerable! Drawings for all the hands, drawings for all the figures, which are enlarged and put together after—often not used at all,or only a little corner. Architectural drawings and drawings of life-sized chestnut trees, and now I have to wrestle with a life-sized horse. There are many angels, and these have been a great difficulty. I have a number of small lay figures—these are dressed in carefully cut dresses of thin white (old) cambric handkerchiefs, white pigeon wings, dried and stiffened in the right position and tacked to them; and drapery is stiffened with thick starch and arranged in folds. Some of them are good and some not so good, but this is the best plan I have found. Better than arranging the drapery on little modelled figures, because I can change the action.

"Shakespeare is nearing completion (at least the Comedies are) and next month will see them all off, I trust. I have taken particular pains with these last—some of the drawings are perhaps needlessly elaborate—but I dare say they will not give that impression when the great leveller (the process man) has passed his magic hand over them.

" I was fired a few months ago to do a Columbus, kneeling in armour in the bright sun on white sand, a monk beside him reading Mass, and the flag of Spain floating behind, the sky full of red flamingoes, boats drawn up on the distant beach. I got as far as making a big drawing in black-and-white on brown paper—and let it go. [Later on Abbey returned to this and finished it.] I have other things sketched out—the Salamanca Council,etc.,—but I only have one pair of hands at present."—The Salamanca picture was never painted, but it will be remembered that one of Abbey's illustrations for *Scribner's Popular History of the United States* depicted the very scene upon which he was now again pondering. He kept his thoughts about him all the time.

HERMIONE, LEONTES, ANTIGONUS, LORDS AND OTHERS.

LEONTES: "AWAY WITH HER TO PRISON."

Twenty-two and a half inches by seventeen inches.

1892.

"A WINTER'S TALE," ACT II, SCENE I

THE ORACLE PROFANED.

LEONTES: "APOLLO'S ANGRY; AND THE HEAVENS THEMSELVES DO STRIKE AT MY INJUSTICE."

Twenty-eight and a half inches by twenty-three and a half inches.

1892.

"A WINTER'S TALE," ACT III, SCENE II.

AN OLD SHEPHERD (PERDITA'S FOSTER FATHER) AND HIS SON.

SHEPHERD: "AND BID US WELCOME TO YOUR SHEEP-SHEARING."

Fifteen inches by twelve inches.

1892.

"A WINTER'S TALE," ACT IV, SCENE III.

AT THE SHEEP SHEARING.

AUTOLYCUS SINGING:

Lawn as white as driven snow;
Cyprus black as e'er was crow;
Gloves as sweet as damask roses;
Masks for faces and for noses;
Bugle-bracelet, necklace-amber,
Perfume for a lady's chamber;
Golden quoifs and stomachers
For my lads to give their dears;
Pins and poking-sticks of steel,
What maids lack from head to heel:
Come, buy of me, come; come buy, come buy;
Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry;
Come, buy of me, come; come buy, come buy."

"A WINTER'S TALE," ACT IV, SCENE III.

Eighteen inches by thirteen inches.

1892.

"The thought [of Shakespearean drawings] first took shape when I saw your drawing of Autolycus." Letter from Henry Alden to E. A. Abbey, February 18, 1886. See page 154.

For this drawing of Autolycus, done in 1879, see *Harper's Magazine*, June, 1881.

INSPIRING VISITORS

In May of this year, 1892, Alma Tadema and his wife came for the first time to Morgan Hall—the first of many visits. Tadema was always a very welcome guest, for he had the rare faculty, possessed also by Mr. Sargent, by Pettie, and by Stanford White, of immediately perceiving what an artist was driving at, and could discuss it from the artist's point of view even when that differed from his own; so that Abbey was always encouraged and stimulated. Nor was this feeling one-sided, for the artists visiting this great studio, where such vast conceptions were in progress, were wont to return to their own easels with renewed enthusiasms.

At that time (May, 1892) Mr. Sargent was working at the east end of the studio, and Abbey at the west end—the north side being occupied by the three great lights. With Tadema in the studio, tremendous discussions went on at both ends. Large pieces of paper, huge rolls of which Abbey always kept on hand, would be outlined and cut to fit a certain figure already painted on the canvas, to which the paper would be pinned so that it exactly covered this figure in order that other figures might be painted on the paper directly over it and the new effect observed. Experiment would in this way follow experiment. The new figure would be roughly painted in, then removed to give place to a second, or even a third; a change in the background or the floor would be tested; a different colour would be tried here and there. In short, every aspect of the work both *in esse* and *in posse* would be talked over with the greatest eagerness. Later, when the place had again settled down to the quiet life, the artist would remove all the paper and, coming with a keener eye and clearer vision to the original work which had been left untouched, would attack the canvas afresh and on a future day out of the chaos would emerge something far more to his mind than before. But very, very rare is the artist who, like Tadema, can thus put himself *en rapport* with the work of another artist whose work and methods are so wholly different from his own.

It was in the same month of May that Professor Ray Lankester wrote from Oxford suggesting a visit one day to Morgan Hall, adding, "York Powell proposes to make the excursion with me"; and in

due course they came. York Powell, afterwards Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, had heard that Abbey was setting his Holy Grail frieze in the Celtic period and using Celtic ornament, and as he was one of the few men who had any deep knowledge of Celtic ornament, Abbey was glad of the opportunity to show him the use he had made of it and to discuss it with him.

The American guests at Morgan Hall that summer included Mrs. Jack Gardner, who owns the famous private picture gallery in Boston, Mr. Charles Dana Gibson and C. F. McKim, who came with Mr. Samuel Abbott, the President of the Board of Trustees of the Boston Public Library, to see how the decorations were proceeding. They were delighted with what they saw, and their enthusiasm knew no bounds, as is seen from the letter which the architect wrote to Mrs. Abbey on his return to London: "At one o'clock this morning after our fourteenth reference to Fairford and its delightful hospitality, Abbott sat writing [to be shown to the trustees] and I reading from your manuscript aloud to him, about the "Quest" which had taken us there, and through which we had been so amply repaid. The more I think about it all, the more I like to, and the more confident I grow of the verdict when the 'Abbey Room,' as it is henceforth to be called, is finally completed.... And Sargent (in another way) what an undertaking, and what an achievement, his splendid 'machine' painted with the 'blood of empty stomachs' is! . . . I thought I knew something about struggling till I reached Fairford, but the attitude of these two men towards their work has been a *revelation* to me."

Another American guest who was hoped for at Morgan Hall but could not come was St. Gaudens, whom I find writing (on June 30th) a letter to Mrs. Abbey, in which he says, "I have always felt that that boy of yours 'didn't know how much he could do,' as he once said of Sargent. May the Boston work lead to other and greater things!" Referring to the invitation to Fairford, he continues: "If I were not the prize sick man on the ocean you would have seen me long ago, but seamanship isn't my distinguishing characteristic, so I have to content myself with the letters and photos that I get from the other

side. They are very pleasant, but not so pleasant as to see my friends in *propria persona*."

At the end of July the Abbeys, accompanied by Mrs. Mead, than whom there never was a better traveller, started for the Continent, their objective being Bayreuth and *Parsifal*. Beginning with Paris, they went by way of Cologne to see, in particular, the Primitives of the Cologne School, and from there direct to Rothenburg on the Tauber. Here, in an early Gothic Franciscan Church—not often used for service—was a beautiful carved pillar and tomb of Diedrich von Berlichingen (who died 1484) and his wife—both life-sized figures in high relief; the man in armour, the wife in a costume (including the peculiar head-dress) almost identical with the costume Abbey had used for the great lady in the water-colour he had recently begun, "The Priest and the Great Lady." Such was the similarity that the artist decided to send for the water-colour, and make the church with the carved pillar the setting for it, on his return from the Wagner festival.

They were at the performance of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth on August 8th, with Vandyke as Parsifal, Kaschmann as Amfortas, and Fraulein Malten as Kundry, and afterwards they heard *Tristan und Isolde*, which was already familiar to them.

Having by this time practically settled the sequence of subjects for his frieze, nothing that he saw at Bayreuth caused Abbey to change or modify his scheme. After Bayreuth they started for Berlin, taking Nuremberg and Dresden on the way. It was at Nuremberg and Rothenburg that his oil-painting "Margaret and Faust" began to assume shape; but this picture was never finished.

On returning to Rothenburg, Abbey found his water-colour awaiting him, and at once set to work upon it, and upon a number of studies of this most enchanting and unmodernised of towns. In particular he was attracted by an unused upper room in the old patrician's house next the church, where the aged lady to whom it belonged made the artist very welcome, permitted Mrs. Abbey to try experiments with curtains, and deplored to them the fact that those who were to come after her were vandals. The house, built on the town

wall, and commanding a wide view of the Tauber valley, was famous for its panelled lower rooms with their Rembrandtish effects, but the white room of the chamber above, with its old portraits, its bird's-egg blue doors and arched ceiling supported by white columns, appealed so much to Abbey that he made several oil studies of it, one of which was used in his oil painting "Pot Pourri," finished for the late Mr. William Vivian, of Queen's Gate, London, in 1899, and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1903. Another view of it appeared in his water-colour "An Attention," painted at the end of 1894, and exhibited at the American Water-Colour Society in the spring of 1895, and at the Royal Water-Colour Society in the spring of 1896.

It was Abbey's intention to return to Rothenburg and paint enough there to form an exhibition of Rothenburg studies; and with this end in mind he called on the Burgomaster and arranged to have immediate news of anything happening to the old lady who owned the house of his choice (who was then over eighty), so that he might have the opportunity of making more studies in it before it was demolished or modernised. In due course the letter arrived announcing her death, but coming at a time when the artist was involved with other tasks, he could not carry out his pleasant purpose.

From Rothenburg they returned to Cologne, taking time there to see the old pictures of the Cologne School, then on to Brussels to see the pictures there, and thence to Antwerp. While at Antwerp, Abbey was much interested in seeing the wall paintings of Baron Leys, and spent a morning with them in the Hotel de Ville, but with this exception—and this was the only time he was ever in Antwerp—he never saw any work by Leys. This should dispel once and for all the idea which seems to have taken root in certain minds that he was a follower of Leys and under his influence.

On returning to Fairford, Abbey plunged into his Boston work and the Comedies, finishing in this year *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Winter's Tale*, *The Taming of the Shrew*. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* he also began in 1892, and finished at least one drawing that year. He also completed the design (reproduced in glass by Tiffany) for the "Children's Window," in St. Peter's Church, Morristown.

This he did in water-colour, the full size of the lights, and chose for his subject "Rise, Peter, kill and eat"; but he transformed into doves the beasts of the earth, the creeping things and fowls of the air, which Peter, in his trance, saw descending to him in the sheet let down to earth.

The Boston painting on which Abbey was principally engaged after his return from Germany was the large canvas of King Arthur's Round Table, where Galahad is led in by Joseph of Arimathea to sit in the Seat Perilous; and it was upon this (which he hoped to have ready to send to the Columbia Exhibition in Chicago in the next year) that he was vigorously at work when John Pettie and his wife came for a visit in November. The painting in immediate progress was that of Arthur's Hall, with the King on his throne and the Knights at the Round Table. On the steps of the throne was at that time a single figure, a boy, the King's cupbearer. Pettie, who had seen the painting a year before and was much impressed by the advance that had been made, suggested that a second figure on the steps near the boy would increase the interest of that spot and would balance better. Abbey no sooner heard the suggestion than he appreciated its force. He posed his model, Colarossi, seized his brush and instantly roughed in the jester precisely in the attitude in which he now stands, and was satisfied that the picture was the stronger and richer for it. Pettie was not only gratified to have his proposition so readily adopted, but was astonished by the mastery of the painter's swift, sure hand.

Further evidence of Abbey's urgency and decisiveness was, however, yet to come, for "Now," said he, "the jester must have a costume," and straightway he pencilled a design suitable for a Royal Fool of the period, and this was handed to the sewing woman to be made. "We'll go to the Church to see the stained glass," he said, "and when we come back the costume will be ready." Even as he said, not only was it ready but Colarossi was dressed in it, and prepared to pose. Taking his brushes, Abbey painted the jester on the steps, there and then, while the audience seated behind him watched every touch with breathless interest. They grew more and more excited as

the figure took life under the painter's strokes, but Abbey remained calm, although overflowing with humorous comment which kept the company in constant laughter. He did not stop until the jester was done. Save for a detail or so, and the mystical owl added later to the back of his garment, he was finished at the sitting. Pettie's admiration was divided between the concentrated power and speed of the artist, the efficiency of the establishment, and the dramatic interest of the contrasted expressions of the two figures: the half-frightened look on the face of the Fool and the wondering curiosity on the face of the boy.

And so we leave 1892.

The year 1893 was similarly apportioned to work in the country and travel abroad; but in Abbey's case there was no antithesis, travel being with him always—and particularly at this time—work also. Before recording his wanderings let me say that a charming reminder that he was not forgotten by his American friends came to him from Mr. Charles Fairchild in May, in the shape of a signed menu card of a lunch at the Union League Club in New York on April 27th, headed by the name of "E.A. Abbey (God bless him!)" and beneath it the autographs of many old associates, headed by St. Gaudens.

This year's travels were to Venice, where Abbey wished to study the Venetian painters with reference to his own decorative work. Beginning with Paris, where they were joined by the Alma Tademas and their two daughters, and where they saw the Walter Gays and the Whistlers, the Abbeys moved on to Verona and then Venice, staying first in an apartment in the Palazzo Dario on the Grand Canal, and then at the Grand Hotel opposite. Besides the oil study of the room in the Church of San Giorgio degli Schiavone, decorated by Carpaccio, from the varying sizes in the scenes of which Abbey found a precedent for varying the sizes of the scenes in his Holy Grail frieze, he made at this time a number of oil studies of cypress trees (for use in "Fiammetta's Song") at the Armenian Monastery, San Lazzaro, where a magnificent avenue of old cypresses then existed but has since been ruthlessly cut down. A number of studies were also made in the beautiful garden of the Curtis's

THE MARRIAGE MORNING OF THESEUS AND HIPPOLYTA.

THESEUS: "WITH POMP, WITH TRIUMPH, AND WITH REVELLING."

Thirty-three and a half inches by nineteen inches.

1893-1894

"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM," ACT I, SCENE I.

PYRAMUS WITH THE ASS'S HEAD.

BOTTOM: "WHY DO THEY RUN AWAY?"

Sixteen and a half inches by ten inches.

1893.

"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM," ACT III, SCENE I.

THE RE-ENTRANCE OF THE PLAYERS.

Twenty-one and a half inches by sixteen and a half inches.

1903.

"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM," ACT V, SCENE I.

on the Giudecca, and often an hour was spent in their garden house at tea, followed by a walk through acres of the famous garden belonging to the Edens. But the weather beginning to be intensely hot it became necessary to start northward. After a couple of days at Padua to see especially the Giottos in the Chapel of the Madonna dell' Arena, and a few days at Verona in the Giusti Gardens, they returned to Fairford.

In Venice, Abbey told Mr. Spielmann, in a letter written some few years later, for the first time he "seriously studied the proportions of the painted decorations to the architectural surrounding—in rooms similar to the one I had in hand. Tintoretto's and Paul Veronese's work appeared to me to be as archaic as I could ever hope to be—and they seemed eminently decorative. I made a careful colour study of the Carpaccio Chapel, and went day after day to the Accademia to see the 'Vision of St. Mark,' and it was the influence, I think I may say, of the latter, and of the Scuola San Rocco decoration, that started me well on the work. I made the studies that summer (1893) for 'Fiammetta's Song,' and tried to give the atmosphere of Carpaccio and Mansuetti—which seemed to me to be an interesting and appropriate thing to try to do, but I abandoned the idea entirely in the larger work and was happier in it than I had been before. I think I may say that the scale is as right as can be—and inasmuch as this was entirely a matter of measurement and calculation, I take particular pride in it. . . . Of course, I hadn't seen the room until I took the canvases over, and my own inexperience had to do with whatever of shortcoming is apparent in this work. I think, too, that a painter should make his decoration suit the room—and not *vice versa*."

Later Abbey found himself wishing that he had acted differently. Writing in 1898 to the same correspondent, he said: "When I saw again the decorations of Pinturicchio and the stanzas of Raphael and the Salle del Cambio of Perugia, I couldn't help wishing that I could have gone on with that tradition instead of having learned so much of what later men had done. Burne-Jones found this possible, and with infinite labour, after a long time, got people to believe in his No-man's land, with its Leonardo basaltic rocks and its Botti-

celli seas—and his far-away subjects were the better for it. I wish I could have done a fifteenth century 'Grail,' but it was not in me. The 'Grail' I beheld was four hundred years earlier—and unless I could have taken up mosaic there was no particular style suggested by the legend—so, as I admired the science of Tintoretto and the handling of later sixteenth-century painters—not to mention later ones still —I got that into the work—and there it is. . . ."

One other project which grew from visits to Carpaccio's little Chapel and Abbey's studies for "Fiammetta's Song," but which unhappily came to naught, may be mentioned. We find the idea —and a very charming one it is—adumbrated in a letter to McKim three years later, in 1896. "When," Abbey writes, "I made the design of 'Fiammetta Singing' I also made several sketches for other subjects in a similar vein—intending that the series should eventually form a frieze for an apartment modelled in its proportions, etc., upon the lines of the small Chapel of San Giorgio Schiavone in Venice. The subjects were all suggested by certain passages in the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, without being precisely illustrations of the text. The personages who are supposed to narrate the tales, sing the songs, etc.—therein given—had retired to a certain villa near Florence to escape the dangers and to forget the horrors of the plague —and 'there to delight ourselves,' as Pampinea says, 'as best we may, yet without transgressing in any act the limits of reason.' So they banqueted beneath the trees, they bathed, they danced and sang, and each vied with the others in efforts to entertain and amuse. It is this condition of things—the thoughtless life of cultivated people within beautiful surroundings—which seemed to me to adapt itself particularly to decorative purposes. It has been my intention to give an impression of a number of handsome personages, before a background of calm dignified landscape—a grave landscape, low and rich in tone as one sometimes sees it in certain tapestries or in the pictures of Giorgione. . . .

"In the other panels of the series I intend that a continuation of the same landscape shall form the background. One of these subjects (abandoning the frieze idea) would be higher in proportion

than the other two, say 10 feet by 6 feet, or larger if the space at my disposal admits of it, and as I have roughly sketched it represents the side of a villa with a flight of steps leading down to a paved terrace and 'all the ladies and the gentlemen likewise being skilful both in singing and dancing and playing on instruments artificially, the Queen (has) commanded that divers instruments should be brought, and as she gave charge Fione takes a lute, and Fiammetta a viol di gamba and begin to play an excellent dance. Whereupon the Queen with the rest of the ladies and the other two gentlemen, having sent their attending servants to dinner, pace forth a dance very majestically.'

"The other subject is a banquet. In an open pavilion a table is spread 'with delicate white napery. The glasses looking like silver,' etc., etc. The company feast at one side of the table, having for a background a trellis-screen overgrown with roses, such as one sees in Italian gardens, farther back the row of cypresses and the crystal dishes. The viands covered with embroidered veils. A fountain plays before the table, etc.

"It is, of course, difficult to describe the picture one has *not* painted —but I have tried, rather lamely, I confess, to give an idea of the notion animating the series. The colour, as I said before, is to be serious and rather sombre—as one sees it in certain Flemish tapestries of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries"—a room thus decorated would be one of the most attractive that can be imagined. Abbey was not destined to carry out his urbane and debonair project, but the "Fiammetta" in Mr. Taylor's house, which McKim designed, has two companions from his brush where something of his purpose may be discerned.

At the Columbian Exhibition, or World's Fair, at Chicago, for whose Art Department Abbey had acted as Chairman of a special Commission in England, and for which he was successful in obtaining a number of representative works, although he failed to induce the authorities at Glasgow to relinquish Whistler's portrait of Carlyle, he was represented not only by the Round Table but by his "Mariana" water-colour, lent by Mr. Marquand, and by fourteen of his Shakespeare drawings, lent by Messrs. Harper. Mr. B. Stuart

Chambers, who was in charge of Messrs. Harpers' exhibits, wrote an interesting letter on the effect of these drawings on sightseers. "Every day [he said] and every hour in the day I have the pleasant duty of showing them to great numbers of visitors of all sorts and conditions, most all of whom greatly enjoy and appreciate them, especially that large class of people who never before have had the opportunity of seeing the original drawings done for illustration, particularly yours. To the majority Anne Page is rather the favourite or prize of the collection; but last week some gondoliers came in (there are a lot of them over here, with gondolas, as features of the Fair), to whom I showed your Shylock in St. Mark's. They stood before it for a long time and with that delight which only Italians can express. I wish you might have heard their animated talk, have seen their smiles and gesticulations. I don't know whether it awakened or relieved a sense of home-sickness; one of them has since returned for a second look, and with a comrade who did not come the first time."

One of Abbey's letters of 1893 which has been preserved is to Charles Parsons, written at the Reform Club on October 16th. A little may be quoted. "There is one very sure thing, which is this—that those with whom one's early working and life is associated whose good opinion one has early learned to seek for and to esteem, are the heart of one's audience all one's life long. I doubt, my dear old friend, if I ever do what seems to my eye a respectable bit of work without wondering whether you will approve of it when it comes under *your* eye. I don't say that I shouldn't be human enough or perhaps 'small' enough to resent it if you should disapprove, but I should be sure of your honesty and clear artistic insight, and no salve I might apply in the way of telling myself that you were a 'landscape painter,' or whatever, would take away the sting of your disapprobation.

"I have been within the last two hours skimming through all the illustrated periodicals with which this place is over-bountifully supplied—for I seldom come to town nowadays, and then only for a day or two—and it really seems as though the decadence of illustration had set in. All the toilsome work one has gone through, and all

EDWIN AUSTIN ABBEY.

AGE FORTY-ONE.

DRAWN BY GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS, R.A.

This charcoal drawing, a wedding gift to Mrs. Abbey, although done in October, 1893, was not signed until sent home in June, 1895. Mr. Watts had hoped to make a second drawing, but the time never came.

the indifference and ignorance and niggardliness one has lived over seem to have been very nearly thrown away. . . . I write this, too, after a weary day indeed—in fact, I don't know that I, as a fidgety man, ever felt more done up—for I have been sitting for my portrait to Mr. Watts—from 9 until 3.30 with a half-hour's intermission for luncheon—and I cannot express by that what it means to have been talking all this while with one of the very great thinkers of our time—and to have listened to what I know is the expression of the very noblest artistic thoughts of this age. That his hand is not always able to carry out his thought doesn't detract from the greatness of the thought, but he has a right to take to himself the credit of the results of that which his thought and enthusiasm have inspired in other people also, and we should put that to his credit in the summary of his life work."

The letter continues: "My Comedies are finished, and it is laughable as I think of it—the regret with which I hang over the *very last* drawing. I have it here and am working in Alfred Gilbert's studio at it." But this last drawing, "The Marriage Morning of Theseus and Hippolyta, 'with pomp, with triumph and with revelling'" (the quotation given by Abbey for the title) which was in pen-and-ink, although finished soon after, was finally discarded. Abbey was not satisfied with it, and later on he made a second drawing, in wash, finished in 1894, and this, the actually last drawing for the Comedies (absurdly entitled in the published book, of which Abbey saw no proofs, "Enter Theseus") was also one of the best. So ended a task begun in 1888.

Another passage in the letter tells something of the progress of Mr. Sargent's Boston commission. "It will," says Abbey, "certainly make a stir, and his noble idea is being carried out regardless of all personal considerations. His embodiment of the oppression and 'abominations of the Philistines' is original and extraordinary, and you will see it, I dare say, within a few months, for it is nearly finished."

As to his own Boston progress, Abbey says: "My Boston work thickens and elaborates itself, and the mechanical and technical difficulties are being overcome and forgotten. I am sure the quality

of the work is improving. . . . I dare say the bit I sent to Chicago will need overhauling when it gets back here, but I expected that, and although I have seen no criticism of it, for or against, I know what there's there as well as anyone." By the end of this year all the panels for the first half of the frieze were well under way—and some of the panels for the second half were already set up. Of the first half were: (1) the child Galahad nourished by the Holy Grail, 6 feet by 8 feet; (2) the Knighting of Galahad by his father Sir Launcelot, after his all-night vigil in the Church, 11 feet by 8 feet; (3) Arthur's Round Table, 24 feet by 8 feet; (4) the Departure of the Knights on the Quest, 17 feet by 8 feet; and on the short wall, over the door, occupying the whole of the wall (5) Galahad at the Grail Castle, this last 33 ft. by 8 feet. Also "Fiammetta's Song" was now making progress, and Abbey made designs for many another subject that was running in his head.

During 1893 the three plays in *Harper's* were *Twelfth Night*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Writing of the Princess's pavilion drawing, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, a critic in one of the papers said, "Perhaps his greatest triumph (in that series) is the charm he gives by the arrangement and repetition of that peculiar mediæval head-dress, which in other hands has often seemed both stiff and ungainly."

Among the friends who visited Morgan Hall in 1893 were Alfred Parsons, the Tademas, the Henschels, Mr. and Mrs. McLure Hamilton, William Laffan, Mr. and Mrs. Stanford White, Mr. and Mrs. Francis Korbay, and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Gay. Another guest was Henry James, in connection with whom let the records of the year be brought to a close by a literary curiosity. Henry James and telegraphy do not naturally suggest themselves as associates, but here is a telegram to Abbey from the great master of leisurely and sufficient verbosity:

"Will alight precipitately at 5.38 from the deliberate 1.50."

END OF VOLUME ONE

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